







RR  
PER

# KOINONIA

The Princeton Theological Seminary Graduate Forum

---

## CONTENTS

Leaving Behind the God-of-the-Gaps CHRISTIAN BERG	128
“Be Mindful, Yah Gracious God” BRYAN D. BIBB	156
The Holy Spirit and Human Agency in Barth’s Doctrine of Sanctification BO KAREN LEE	175
The Passionate Aggression in Creation and the Human Psyche JILL L. MCNISH	194
In Search of a Promised Land STEPHANIE STIDHAM ROGERS	219
Looking Backward Again RANDY BUSH	246
BOOK REVIEWS	254

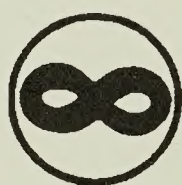
Volume XII.2  
Fall 2000

ISSN 1047 - 1057



*KOINONIA JOURNAL* is published by doctoral students under the auspices of Princeton Theological Seminary and is intended to promote interdisciplinary discussion and exploration of new and emerging issues in the study of religion. The journal is published twice a year. Contributions are welcome: style specifications are available over the internet at <http://www.ptsem.edu/koinonia>. Correspondence and subscription orders should be addressed to *KOINONIA JOURNAL*, Princeton Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 821, Princeton, NJ 08542-0803. Subscriptions and submissions may also be sent via the Internet to [KOINONIA@PTSEM.EDU](mailto:KOINONIA@PTSEM.EDU).

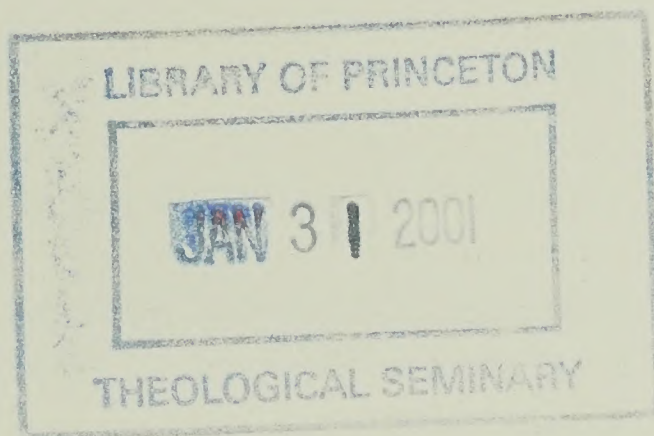
*KOINONIA* is indexed in *Religion Index One: Periodicals*, published by the American Theological Library Association, 820 Church Street, Suite 300, Evanston, IL 60201. Book reviews are indexed in *Index to Book Reviews in Religion*. These indexes are part of ATLA Religion Database, available on CD-ROM from ATLA and also on-line via Dialog Information Services.



The paper used in this publication is acid-free and meets the minimum requirement of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48–1984

Deirdre King Hainsworth and Christopher S.D. Rogers, Executive Editors  
Scott R. Paeth, Production Editor  
Jaehyun Kim and John Maxfield, History Editors  
Chad Mullet Bauman and S.K. Kim, MEHR Editors  
Joseph Scrivner and Matthew Stith, Old Testament Editors  
Adam Becker, New Testament Editor  
Raimundo C. Barreto, Jr. and Ruben Rosario-Rodriguez, Religion and Society Editors  
Dieter Heinzl and Rachel Baard, Theology Editors  
Robert Hoch, Practical Theology Editor  
Eric L. Thomas, Editor-at-Large





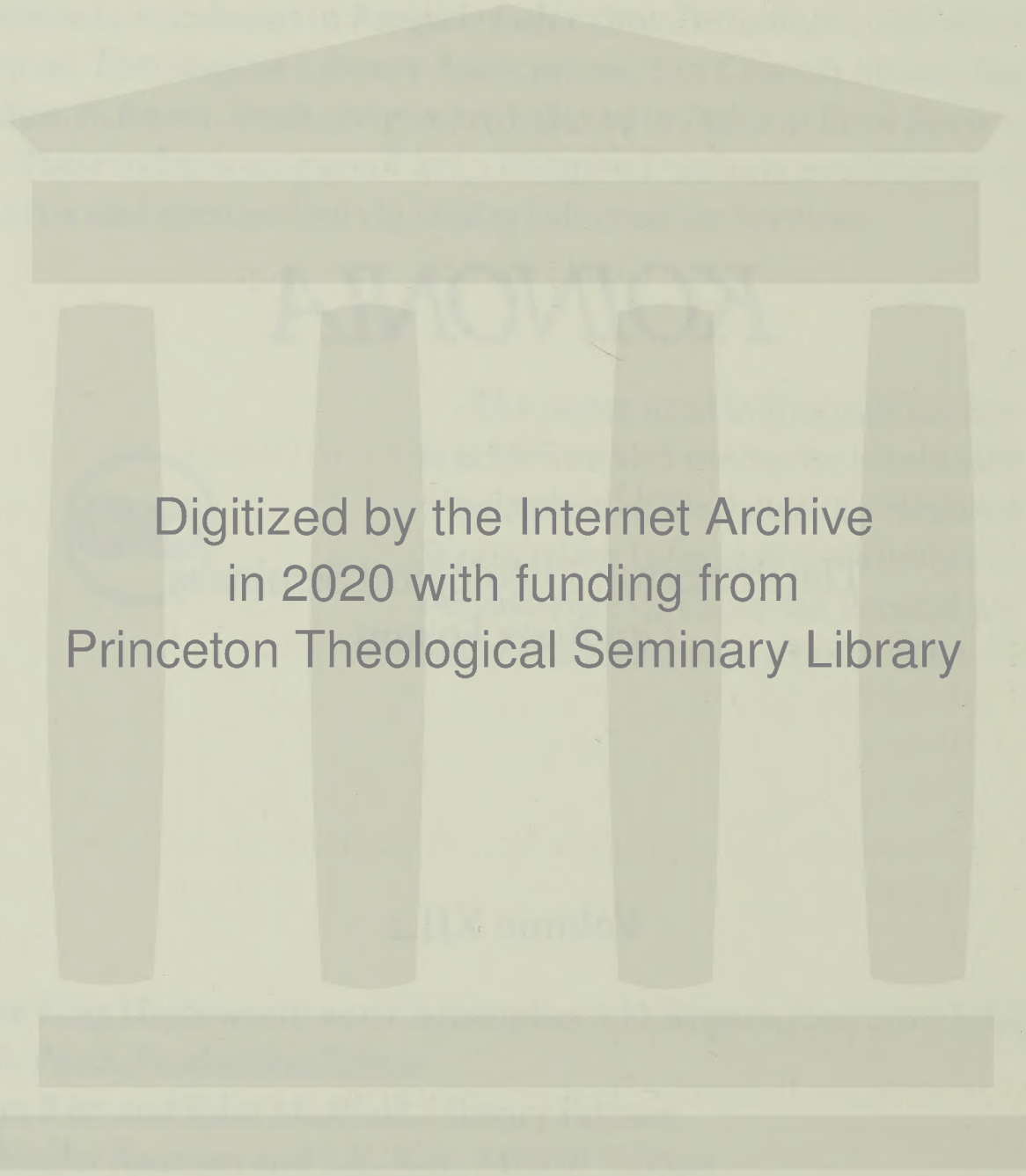
# *KOINONIA*

The Princeton Theological Seminary  
Graduate Forum

Volume XII.2

Fall 2000





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2020 with funding from  
Princeton Theological Seminary Library



Volume XII.2 • Fall 2000

## *KOINONIA*

### CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	IX
Leaving Behind the God-of-the-Gaps: Towards a Theological Response to Scientific Limit Questions CHRISTIAN BERG	128
“Be Mindful, Yah Gracious God”: Extra-biblical Evidence and Josiah’s Religious Reforms BRYAN D. BIBB	156
The Holy Spirit and Human Agency in Barth’s Doctrine of Sanctification BO KAREN LEE	175
The Passionate Aggression in Creation and the Human Psyche: An Argument For Its Source In and Use By God JILL L. MCNISH	194
In Search of a Promised Land: American Protestants and the Holy Land at the Turn-of-the-Century STEPHANIE STIDHAM ROGERS	219
Looking Backward Again: The Future of Utopian Fiction RANDY BUSH	246



## BOOK REVIEWS

*Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe.*

*Volume 1: The Medieval Inheritance.* Edited by Bruce Gordon.

JOHN ARTHUR MAXFIELD

254

*Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe.*

*Volume 2: The Later Reformation.* Edited by Bruce Gordon.

ARIANE ARPELS-JOSIAH

256

*Go Preach! Mark's Kingdom Message and the Black Church*

*Today.* By Brian K. Blount.

I. BRENT DRIGGERS

258

*An Ethics of Remembering.* By Edith Wyschogrod.

TODD BILLINGS

261

*The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian*

*Apocalypses.* By Richard Bauckham.

CASEY DERYL ELLEDGE

263

*The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius*

*Wellhausen.* By Ernest W. Nicholson.

JOSEPH F. SCRIVNER

265

*Christians in Asia Before 1500.* By Ian Gillman and Hans-

Joachim Klimkeit.

ARUN W. JONES

268

*Mission and Catechesis: Alexandre de Rhodes & Inculturation*

*in Seventeenth-Century Vietnam.* By Peter C. Phan.

CHAD MULLET BAUMAN

271

*Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emer-*

*gence of Christianity.* By Paula Fredriksen.

ADAM H. BECKER

274



*A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South.* By Eugene D. Genovese.

*Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863-1877.* By Daniel W. Stowell.

JOE L. COKER

276

*Marriage, Family, and Law in Medieval Europe: Collected Studies.* By Michael M. Sheehan

ANNE E. LESTER

280

*Wandering at Ease in the Zhuangzi.* Edited by Roger T. Ames.

JOHN M. THOMPSON

282

*Jesus Is My Uncle: Christology from a Hispanic Perspective.* By Luis G. Pedraja.

RUBÉN ROSARIO-RODRÍGUEZ

285

*The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence.* By John Sanders.

ANDREI A. BUCKAREFF

287







## EDITORIAL

From its beginning, Koinonia Journal has sought to publish interdisciplinary and diverse essays in the study of religion. Each year in our Fall Forum issue, we publish a central paper with respondents from several other disciplines, giving the reader an opportunity to explore a particular topic from a variety of fields, methodologies, and perspectives. However, it is in our annual open issue that we tend to see the greatest variety of disciplines and topics addressed. This issue exemplifies this trend. The five essays presented herein address disciplines as varied as theology, physics, psychology, archaeology, literature, history, and Old Testament studies. In most cases, the author draws upon a secondary field while delving into his or her primary area of expertise. The essays in our open issue are selected for their interdisciplinary qualities and their ability to stimulate scholarly dialogue.

Christian Berg, in his essay "Leaving Behind the God-of-the-gaps: Towards a Theological Response to Scientific Limit Questions," notes the increasing attention of scientists to questions going beyond the realm of their scientific work, reflecting on questions of origins, or even on the existence of God. The problem he sees in this is that many of these scientists have little or no theological expertise, and it is often unclear where their science ends and their metaphysical or religious reflection begins. He thus asks how theology might contribute to these scientific reflections on origins. Theology has often entered this debate by positing a "God-of-the-gaps," reflecting theologically only on those areas unexplainable by science. Berg seeks a healthier relationship between science and theology, seeking to relate scientific insights to the broader setting of life and looking for explanations that go beyond scientific methods. One area of reflection that he finds particularly rewarding is the intersection of physics and the Christian doctrine of creation. Rather than rebuilding outdated walls between disciplines, he seeks to allow each discipline its own integrity, while still allowing for Christian interpretations of scientific accounts of reality. Berg's essay was one of three grand prize submissions of the 2000 "Expanding Humanity's Vision of God" essay contest sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation. I am pleased, on behalf of the Editorial Board, to congratulate Mr. Berg on this accomplishment, and to present his essay in Koinonia Journal.

In her essay, "In Search of a Promised Land: American Protestants and the Holy Land at the Turn-of-the-Century," Stephanie Stidham Rogers finds the roots of today's multi-million dollar Holy Land tourism industry in the late nineteenth-century travel of American Protestant ministers to Palestine. In the



late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it became increasingly common for American Protestant ministers to make “pilgrimages” to the Holy Land and write of their experiences for eager audiences in the United States. During a time when such international travel was largely for the wealthy, American Protestants took vicarious tours of the Holy Land through the writings of these pastors. She argues that there are enough similarities in these travel narratives to identify a genre of literature—the Holy Land travel narrative. Common to almost all of these narratives was something she calls “geo-piety,” a view of the land itself as a “fifth gospel,” allowing for a more immediate experience and understanding of the Divine. Moreover, she links this genre of literature to the popular orientalism literature of the time, allowing American Protestants to make a virtual pilgrimage to an exciting far-off land. For both the pastors and the readers at home, Palestine became an “out of doors gospel,” upon which the religious idealism of American Protestants was projected.

“Could aggression in humankind be a reflection of God’s own aggression?” With this thought-provoking question, Jill McNish takes us through an examination of human aggression as a reflection of the image of God. Drawing on psychology, evolutionary psychology, and theology, McNish argues that human aggression has been improperly stigmatized and rejected in Christian theology. McNish posits that aggression is a natural and necessary part of being human—one that preserves and enhances human character and that allows human love to flourish. Drawing on a wide range of scholars, she differentiates between aggression as violence, which is destructive to relationship, and aggression as passion or vitality, without which humankind would not love or thrive. Moreover, she links this passionate aggression to the image of God and the theological doctrine of creation, claiming that human aggression is rooted in God’s passion. She seeks to show that—far from being a part of the human psyche to be eschewed—theologians should recognize and celebrate the creative power of human aggression.

Bo Karen Lee, in her essay “The Holy Spirit and Human Agency in Barth’s Doctrine of Sanctification,” reflects on the role that Karl Barth “assigns to the human agent in the subjective appropriation of that which is objectively complete in Christ.” At issue is Barth’s consistent claim that God is Lord, that God reveals this fact, and that humankind can add nothing to this fact. If this is the case, Lee asks what is left for humans to do; what space, if any, does Barth allow for human agency? Lee’s initial answer to this question is that Barth provides insufficient detail for how humans might appropriate God’s grace and sanctification. However, she goes on to suggest that in his discussion of prayer, Barth



allows for a critical link between human divine agency and human agency in the reception of the Holy Spirit. “Through prayer, Christians are called to cry out for more of the Holy Spirit, and because God responds, it is through prayer that they thus attain the power to live in light of the sanctification that is already theirs in Christ.”

According to the Old Testament book of Second Kings (22-23), the king Josiah used newly discovered scrolls of the Law of Moses to introduce sweeping changes to the religious practices of Judah during the seventh century BCE. In his essay, “‘Be Mindful, Yah Gracious God’: Extra-biblical Evidence and Josiah’s Religious Reform,” Bryan Bibb asks how a historian might evaluate whether there was indeed large-scale religious reform during Josiah’s reign, and, if so, whether these reforms were implemented primarily by religious motivations. Through a careful examination of the available extra-biblical evidence, Bibb concludes that there is sufficient evidence to show that there was a cultural shift in religious worship during Josiah’s reign, but that one cannot easily demarcate between religious and political motivations. Though concerned specifically with Josiah’s reform, Bibb also seeks to address the larger methodological question of the relationship between biblical and extra-biblical evidence in the reconstructing of the history of ancient Israel. He notes several problems with the use of extra-biblical evidence, particularly those of availability and interpretation. He concludes that the Old Testament scholar and the Ancient Near East historian cannot rely on extra-biblical evidence to prove the validity of biblical accounts. Nevertheless, when used as one tool in a comprehensive analysis, extra-biblical evidence provides an otherwise missing piece of the puzzle.

In “Looking Backward Again: The Future of Utopian Fiction,” Randy Bush reflects on the genre of utopian fiction through a discussion of Edward Bellamy novel *Looking Backward*, which was written in 1887. Bellamy’s novel recounts the story of Julian West, who fell asleep in 1887 and awoke 113 years later in the year 2000. Having just passed through into the new millennium, it is interesting to look at Bellamy’s vision of twenty first-century America. Bush notes that Bellamy was remarkably accurate in several of his literary predictions. (The link that Bush draws between Bellamy’s “city bazar” (sic) and Sam Walton is amusing and thought provoking.) Yet Bush also notes that Bellamy falls short on issues such as the earth’s resources, homogeneous society, and “first-world” biases. Having examined Bellamy’s novel, Bush goes on to lament the decline of utopian vision and literature. He notes that most mid to late twentieth-century literature carries a largely negative view of the future, or, if it does posit a positive future, it is one that comes about only after some form of apocalyptic ca-



tastrophe. He is particularly discouraged that people of faith have not challenged the prevailing utopian reticence. He concludes with a discussion of the necessity of positive, even utopian, visions of the future, and how such visions may work to change the present.

On a personal note, after editing the past three volumes, my tenure as Executive Editor has come to an end. It has been a joy and a challenge to bring to our readers the work of new and emerging scholars in the study of religion. Koinonia's new Executive Editor is Ms. Deirdre King Hainsworth, a name that will be familiar to many of our long-time readers. Deirdre has previously served as Koinonia's Religion and Society Editor and as a consulting editor. I am confident that she will continue to bring to our readers high-quality, diverse, and engaging intellectual material. I wish to express my thanks to the members of the Editorial Board. Without the hard work and dedication of the members of the Board this publication would not be possible.

CHRISTOPHER S. D. ROGERS  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR



# *KOINONIA*

The Princeton Theological Seminary  
Graduate Forum



# Leaving Behind the God-of-the-Gaps: Towards a Theological Response to Scientific Limit Questions

CHRISTIAN BERG

## 1. LIMIT QUESTIONS AT THE INTERFACE BETWEEN SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY

### 1.1 Scientists Raise Limit Questions

Nowadays, quite a number of scientists are concerned with questions going beyond the realm of their scientific work.<sup>1</sup> Numerous books have been published in the last decades, in which scientists have addressed issues going beyond their investigations as scientists, referring to questions of origins, to limit questions, or to questions about God. These are issues such as the “Physics of Immortality” (Tipler), the “Mind of God” (Davies), or the “Theory of Everything” (Hawking). Apparently, scientific investigation leads to questions which cannot be answered by science itself. One will hardly find explicit religious statements in a scientific journal. That these questions are nevertheless relevant for a deeper understanding of reality, and that they are of importance not only for academic curiosity, but appeal to a broader public, can be seen by the fact that they are debated in popular, non-technical writings. The theses of Jaques Monod, Carl Sagan, Richard Dawkins, Frank Tipler, Paul Davies, Stephen Hawking, or Stephen J. Gould have helped shape the public’s (mis-)understanding considerably at the interface between science and religion. Unfortunately, sometimes they have failed to make clear where their scien-

<sup>1</sup>I am indebted to Princeton Theological Seminary for granting a Scholarship for Doctoral Research in Spring 1999. With this paper I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation in return. I also want to thank Wentzel van Huyssteen and Ivica Novakovic for suggesting some helpful comments concerning this paper.



tific investigations end and their metaphysical reflections start. Little theological expertise is necessary to realize that the latter are, at least on the average, by far not as sophisticated as the former—at theology’s expense. Is it, for instance, really true that “revealed theology is to natural theology as geocentric astronomy is to heliocentric astronomy” (Tipler 1994: 338)? Is religion “now part of science” (339)? Is it true that “if we do discover a complete theory” that we then “would know the mind of God” (Hawking 1988: 175)? It should be unquestioned that there is a need for theological contributions to this debate. But how can theology properly contribute? I want to argue the following thesis:

§Theology needs to respond to the limit questions raised by scientists. On the one hand, theology ought to take seriously how scientists themselves conceive the scientific endeavor. Theology ought to account for the autonomy of scientific explanations (1.2). On the other hand, from both the scientists’ and theologians’ viewpoint a total separation of science and theology is unsatisfactory (1.3).

§The autonomy of science prohibits theology from interfering with any kind of god-of-the-gaps. In order to provide both an autonomy of science and a place for sensible theological contribution to the interface between science and theology, one needs to know how a god-of-the-gaps has to be understood (2.1) and why it ought to be avoided (2.2).

§Despite all the explanatory power science has achieved, it is nevertheless limited. Not even a “Theory of Everything” could explain literally everything (3.1). Several contingencies would remain unexplained even in a “Theory of Everything,” simply because the scientific method is limited. (3.2)

§Nevertheless, if we do seek an interpretation of *all* experience, we need to relate scientific insights to the broader setting of life and look for explanations going beyond scientific methods. The Christian doctrine of creation offers a reasonable explanation for those questions that a scientific account of reality leaves open (4.1): the contingencies in the scientific description of reality correspond to the fact that the world is understood as being created by God’s free and sovereign will (4.2, 4.3). Today’s physics (especially quantum mechanics and chaos theory) teaches us that we live in environments that are inaccessible to science insofar that they are highly contingent. Here is a legitimate place for theology to speak about God’s continuing creation and God’s action *without* being in danger of using a god-of-the-gaps. God works, as it were, at the methodological limits of science (4.4). The striking feature about today’s physics is that it reveals these limits in the midst of our physical reality as human beings.



§Since scientific insights are not sufficient for a rational account of all experience, they need to be related to the broader setting of personal life (5).

### 1.2 Scientists Claim the Autonomy of Science

An apparently necessary condition for a proper and sustainable theological contribution to those limit questions raised by scientists, which can at least be tolerated (or even accepted) by them, would be to account for the way scientists themselves conceive their scientific endeavor. Since the scientific description of reality does not explicitly refer to any religious statements, the theoretical and cognitive description of reality that science provides is independent of religious intervention. This seems to be one fundamental assumption shared by a vast majority of scientists. The latest explicit proposal of this kind comes from Stephen J. Gould (Gould 1999). One of the two “primary claims” of his principle of NOMA—the Non-Overlapping Magisteria—is to attribute equal status to both “magisteria” (58-9). Although he himself is not dedicated to a specific religious tradition, he wants to acknowledge the importance of religion “for any complete human life” (59). But Gould is also very concerned about the “independence of the magisteria” (63), because only by means of this independence can “the false conflict between science and religion” (6) be avoided.

I do not think that such a separation of science and theology, such a return to old dichotomies, can be the final goal of relating these disciplines.<sup>2</sup> I do think, however, theology has to take seriously what I assume as common denominator among (the vast majority of) scientists. Namely, the independence of the causal explanations science provides from any religious influence. Scientists might (and do) differ in their metaphysical and religious interpretations of scientific insights, but most of them would presumably agree that religious assertions must not enter the level of a causal explanation of the world. This conviction is certainly shared by many theologians as well—at least in principle. The times are passed in which God easily entered the level of scientific explanations as a hypothesis. Ours is rather a time of separation or independence into two separate realms of reality. Indeed, such a separation has had a long tradition in modernity and was revitalized under the influence of neo-orthodoxy, existentialism, and analytic philosophy (Barbour 1998: 84-9).

<sup>2</sup>This dichotomy, however, seems to result from the very fact that one does *not* meet the self-assessment of religious communities.

### 1.3 Total Independence Sufficient?

Yet can we remain content with a dichotomy of science and theology, with two airtight compartments of reality? Do we not have to move beyond the position of independence that has been prevailing in the 20th century? “We cannot remain content with a plurality of unrelated languages if they are languages about the same world” (Barbour 1998: 89). But why do we need to understand the world of science and the world of theology as “the same”; why do we need to conceive reality as a unity? Let us consider some arguments from the viewpoint of scientists and theologians respectively.

Coming from the scientist’s viewpoint, on the one hand, I submit the unity of reality is suggested by critical realism. Critical realism, the prevailing epistemological position among scientists,<sup>3</sup> asserts that science makes “tentative ontological claims” (Barbour 1974: 42) about reality. Scientists believe that their theories do refer in some way or another to reality, although these theories are always provisional and revisable. This is not to be understood naïvely as if our theories were real *pictures* of reality (as in naïve realism), but still it is upheld that we do have at least some access to reality. I submit that this very concept of critical realism in science forbids a total separation of science and religion from the viewpoint of a critical realist scientist, for science leads us to acknowledge that humans are psychosomatic unities. Insights from diverse fields of the life sciences proved the strong correlation between psychic and somatic phenomena. A consequent critical realist approach, however, would imply that this psychosomatic unity in one way or another refers to the *real nature* of human beings. Different kinds of experience, e.g., scientific or religious, are at least related via the experiencing subject; they cannot refer to two *totally separate*<sup>4</sup> realities. In other words, if we take critical realism in science seriously, the insights in our physical constitution suggest that we should not treat the scientific and the religious realm of life as totally distinct. Thus, the critical realism of scientists suggests that we take into consideration the broader setting of life and that we do not build up a dichotomy between sci-

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Ian Barbour, who says that “most scientists are incurably realist” (1998: 118); likewise John C. Polkinghorne: “The decision made by the vast majority of working scientists, consciously or unconsciously, is to opt for critical realism...” (1998: 53).

<sup>4</sup>This, of course, does not say anything about the *truth* of religious assertions. It only says that there can hardly be a dichotomy between the experiences of a scientist *as* a scientist and the experience of a scientist *as* a believer or *as* a non-believer.



ence and religion.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, one could also support this position from an evolutionary epistemological perspective, for the process of evolution was a “belief-gaining process” (van Huyssteen 1997: 151), i.e., there are roots for our beliefs in evolutionary biology.

Coming from a theological view of reality, on the other hand, implies also some kind of unity of reality because of the unity of the *Triune* Creator. Since Christians believe in the Triune God as being the Creator of heaven and earth, “of all that is, seen and unseen,” reality has to be ultimately understood as one. This cognitive dimension of Christian faith, its truth claim about reality, is the reason that critical realism has been defended not only in science, but also in religion (Barbour 1974: 49-70) and theology (van Huyssteen 1997: 40-52). Theology, too, makes ontological claims and is not just providing helpful devices for coping with life. The critical realist theologian rejects “the claim that religious language provides only a useful system of symbols that can be action guiding and meaningful for the believer without being in any sense reality depicting in its cognitive claims...” (van Huyssteen 1997: 43).

Since both science and theology make tentative ontological claims about reality, there is a need for relating both fields, if possible, in a constructive dialogue. A first step towards such a dialogue can be seen in the limit questions raised by scientists.<sup>6</sup> However, theologians might hesitate to engage in this field despite the need for dialogue, in order not to slide back to some sort of god-of-the-gaps.

## 2. THE GOD-OF-THE-GAPS: WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT OUGHT NOT TO BE

Too often in history there have been conflicts between “science” and “theology.” The ideas of Bruno, Galileo, Newton, and Darwin are just a few examples of what is seen by many as a conflict between either the church or theology and science. Bruno was burned, Galileo arrested, some of Newton’s remarks induced the “god-of-the-gaps,” Darwin’s theory was strongly debated by theologians and

<sup>5</sup>Surely I am not superimposing any scientific rationality to theology. I just want to stress that *even* from a solely scientific-critical realist’s viewpoint a bifurcation of reality into two separate realms is to be questioned. This is to make the dialogue with scientists easier and help them to see why a “bifurcation of nature” is not even consistent from *their* point of view.

<sup>6</sup>Ian Barbour (1990: 17-20; 1998: 90-93) has made this proposal to start some kind of science and religion dialogue with boundary or limit questions.

has been repudiated by some of them. How can theology be sure not to provide another example of this sort without simply withdrawing from these issues, even more so since some current theological interpretations of scientific insights seem to come close to a god-of-the-gaps concept? John Polkinghorne, e.g., speaks of “*intrinsic gaps*” in the bottom-up description of reality due to the indeterminacies of chaotic systems and of humans as “people of the gaps” (1993:237). Although he states that he is not implying an “unacceptable return to the God of the gaps, in the pejorative sense of the word” (ibid.), I doubt that it is helpful to use the phrase “god-of-the-gaps,” which has been so strongly debated throughout the past centuries. Holmes Rolston, in his recent book, seeks a theological interpretation of modern evolutionary biology. He sees God as being a “countercurrent to entropy, a sort of biogravity that lures life upward” (Rolston 1999:364). He obviously mixes scientific terms (entropy) with terms suggesting an agent (lure). To answer the question of why life started on earth, Rolston refers to “divine coaching on occasions” (368).

In a situation in which many scientists—being critical of religious interference—address religious issues, theology needs to search for profound interpretations of scientific findings that are clearly repudiating the failures of past approaches, in this case the god-of-the-gaps. Since nobody could sensibly claim to believe in a god-of-the-gaps, because it is in a way the negation of a positive concept of God, one should be clear about such a concept and the underlying assumptions in order to prevent it from sneaking in through the back door.

## 2.1 What Is a God-of-the-Gaps Concept?

J.H. Brooke speaks of a “god-of-the-gaps” concept “if statements about God are used to fill the gaps in scientific explanation” (Brooke 1991: 29). To assume that God would be able to fill the gaps in the scientific explanation of reality presupposes that God acts on the same level as natural causes. Having rejected Thomistic theology and the Aristotelean theory of the four causes at the beginning of modern times, only efficient causality (*causa efficiens*) remained as a matter of scientific interest (cf. Brooke: 54-6). In fact, this isolated interest in the *causa efficiens* was one of the reasons why the new scientific method has been so successful. No reference to any purpose, to any final cause (*causa finalis*), was accepted anymore. From now on an explanation was solely seen in naming an efficient cause, i.e., describing a certain phenomenon in terms of a general law and boundary conditions. Nevertheless, this sole concentration on the *causa efficiens* has always been a pure methodological assumption, not an ontological claim (at least not by science as a discipline). The scientific description of



reality deliberately and methodologically dispenses with references to God on the level of the efficient causal description of reality. This implies that scientists know all they need to know *as scientists*, if they are able to name all the causal factors leading to a certain event, if this event can be shown to be a special case of a broader natural law, and if they can build a consistent broader theory that embraces this natural law and coheres with other laws. If everything is explained in terms of efficient causality, if the theory fits the data (or vice versa), and if predictions for future events are possible, they are content with the explanatory power of this theory. The only thing remaining to be done is to search for an even simpler theory which could explain the same data with even fewer theoretical assumptions, as well as to search for a more comprehensive theory that includes more phenomena than the current one.

Since this sole interest in the *causa efficiens* seems to exclude God from nature (God does not enter the level of scientific description of nature), time and again a place for God's action has been sought by referring to God as some sort of explanation for *gaps* in the scientific account of the world.<sup>7</sup> The first famous example of referring to God instead of a scientific, efficient causal explanation was given by Newton. His theory of gravity could explain the planetary motions and provided a broader theoretical framework for the works of both Galileo and Kepler. But Newton could not explain why all planets orbit around the sun in the same direction. Therefore, he explained this aesthetically pleasing scheme by appealing to God's initial design (Brooke: 29). Of course, such an explanation was soon to be shown as shortsighted, since Kant and Laplace could give a very sensible efficient causal explanation of this phenomenon with their nebular hypothesis. What Newton saw as divine intervention, which could not be further explained, was now shown to be the possible result of an efficient causal explanation ("possible" as long as that theory was not proved). Therefore, when Laplace explained his nebular hypothesis to Napoleon and was asked by the emperor where he accounted for the Creator in his theory, he famously replied that he did not have any need of that hypothesis (Barbour 1998: 35).

The scientific endeavor tries to explain all of reality insofar as it exhibits efficient causal qualities and can be viewed by scientific means. Science tries to account for the *whole* of reality insofar as it fits its means. There is *no realm or gap* in the scientific explanation that could not possibly be explained sometime. The

<sup>7</sup>I deliberately avoid using the phrase "scientific world view" because strictly speaking it tends to diminish the distinction that is of great importance in this context, namely between the scientific *description* of reality, and that which can be called world view or *Weltanschauung*.

claim of science to deal with all of reality exactly insofar as it can be dealt with by scientific means has been enormously successful. Any attempt to put God's action on this level has been repudiated sooner or later. Hence one sees at the heart of a god-of-the-gaps an underlying relationship between science and theology, in which God's action is seen to be in competition with efficient causality. Whenever a god-of-the-gaps concept occurs, one has tried to explain natural processes by God's intervention. God is used as a hypothesis in order to explain gaps *in the causal explanation* or to explain something "better" than without the God-hypothesis.

## 2.2 Why Is a God-of-the-Gaps to Be Avoided?

Why should theologians not try to engage in scientific theories showing how God acts in nature? Out of the many possible answers to this question I shall list just a few arguments from the viewpoints of both scientists and theologians.

What objections can scientists have against a god-of-the-gaps? As I said, a god-of-the-gaps uses the God-hypothesis in order to explain phenomena on the level of an efficient causal explanation of reality. If there were such gaps, there would be phenomena which could be detected by our senses or some scientific apparatus which have no explanation at all in terms of efficient causality. Even after thorough investigation there would be phenomena which remain unexplainable and mysterious, holes or gaps in the causal nexus. The causal explanation of the world would be incomplete. Yet this is at odds with all that the history of science has taught us. Surely there are unexplainable phenomena, but the physical reality seems to be extremely self-consistent and closed. How can we be so sure about that? Well, of crucial importance for physicists are certain conservation rules, e.g., energy conservation. However, we simply do not see any violation to this, any "holes," where energy would enter our world out of nothing. The conservation of energy has proven to be very well validated.<sup>8</sup> From this alone scientists have very good reasons to assume that it is highly unlikely that they have accidentally missed the gaps the god-of-the-gaps would use. The history of science is therefore a fascinating story of filling explanatory gaps in the scientific account of the world. A god-of-the-gaps simply does not work in the long run. It never has worked. Every time scientists and theologians argued about God's role in nature and theologians explained natural phenomena in terms of God's action, theology was defeated sooner or later.

<sup>8</sup>Quantum field theory, to be sure, allows for certain violations of this rule, but only within Heisenberg's uncertainty principle.



Moreover, the very notion of a natural law presupposes a self-contained causal nexus of the world. The assumption that something happens apart from natural laws endangers the very concept of the natural law itself. The theories of astrophysics, for instance, make sense only insofar as one presupposes the validity of the same laws at every point in space-time. All scientific research has to presuppose that all natural phenomena exhibit certain regularities. If this search for regularities were abandoned, there would be no difference between science and, let us say, collecting stamps.

If young-Earth-creationists claim that God created fossils, distant galaxies and the whole universe in such a way that they only *appear* to be old, one can just as well assume that God had created the whole universe just ten minutes ago. Everything up to that moment would just be illusory, including all of what we believe we had experienced until ten minutes ago. If one is willing to assume the possibility of the former (that God could arbitrarily intervene into the causal nexus), one can never exclude the possibility of the latter. This is not to say that it is literally impossible to claim this, but it does not go together with critical realism.

Furthermore, most physicists are thrilled and fascinated by the “beauty” of a mathematical description of reality (this holds, I submit, similarly for all scientists).<sup>9</sup> Consistency and coherence are major criteria for the validation of theories (cf. Barbour 1998: 113), and ever since the beginning of the scientific endeavor this search has been successful. Coming from the scientist’s experience of this “beauty” of natural laws, the old deistic idea of the perfection of the divine laws still exerts some attraction. A dubious light would be cast on the Christian God if God’s created lawful order has to be supplemented by direct divine intervention—like a God who unfortunately forgot to account for certain phenomena and has to trespass on his own preserves.<sup>10</sup> This might

<sup>9</sup>One might argue, that, e.g., the biological evolution is anything but elegant because of its randomness (F. Crick does so). But this is not necessarily the case: If you “played the tape of evolution” not only once, but several times, you would get similar melodic elements appearing in each, as van Valen maintains. Hence, one could indeed see “beauty” even in the evolutionary process (cf. Rolston 1999: 20).

<sup>10</sup>As I see it, this argument is valid even if one, for good reasons, rejects the notion of a deistic designer. For it is not consistent to think of God’s creation as both bringing order into chaotic situations—as God is understood, e.g., in important traditions of the Old Testament—and at the same time overruling orderly structures. Again, this does not at all exclude God’s active role in the process of the world; it only states that God’s action does not compete with the natural causes.

sound like a rather soft, aesthetic argument. But the aesthetic intuition of scientists and their search for coherent and “beautiful” solutions for the description of natural phenomena has opened the door for new scientific insights and theories. The history of science as it appears to date has been a history of developing ever more comprehensive, more abstract, and more inclusive theories. As we know, “Occam’s razor,” stating that the fewer assumptions a scientific theory needs the better it is, has certainly proved to be a secure guide for developing theories.

Moreover, if occasionally a natural explanation were not even imaginable for certain phenomena, believing in God’s intervention would literally be the only possible explanation. In other words, believing in God would be inevitable. Yet, seeing God at work in this world is not possible by means of sense impressions or reasoning alone; it necessitates some kind of revelatory experience. Conceiving God’s action requires God’s revelation. However, precisely because God reveals Godself wherever and whenever *God* wants to be revealed, there could not be a law-like coercive principle or sensation, which forces one to accept an event as *God’s* action. In other words, if God is revealed only where God wants to be revealed, a revelatory experience is something which cannot be understood as following with cogent necessity from any sensation. If literally no other explanation were possible, one would *have to* acknowledge God’s action. Interestingly enough, the Bible itself quite often refers to events of God’s action in a context, where other explanations are not only possible, but even mentioned. For instance, in John 12: 28-9, it is said that there are different interpretations of a certain phenomenon among the same people, which some interpret as thunder, others as an angel, while the writer himself conceives this as a voice from heaven.

Finally, one could see God’s self-limitation to preserve the created order—including the natural laws—as being part of a kenotic understanding of God. That God bears the final consequences of the laws of this world becomes apparent most clearly in the Cross. If God limits Godself not to violate the dynamics and the laws of the human sphere of God’s creation, why should God choose not to preserve the (apparently less important but) even more consistent natural laws? In other words, does a god-of-the-gaps reveal an underlying *theologia triumphans*?



### 3. "THEORY OF EVERYTHING?"

The history of science reveals a remarkable unification of theories. In physics, for instance, already some one and a half centuries ago, the forces of magnetic and electric fields could be described by one comprehensive theory of electromagnetic fields. Maxwell showed that magnetic forces, which had been known for centuries, and the electric forces, which were discovered later, are in fact only two sides of the same coin. The excitement such a discovery produced among physicists can only be understood if one recalls Occam's principle of economy. The theory of electromagnetism was only one step in an ongoing unification of theories. The forces of the electromagnetic field itself could be shown more recently as a special case of an even more comprehensive theory, which includes the electromagnetic and the weak force (Weinberg/Salam). Physicists are now trying to unify this theory with the theory for the strong force to a Grand Unifying Theory (GUT). They hope that finally there will be only one giant comprehensive theory including all other theories of physics, which might be called a "Theory of Everything" (TOE). Hawking thinks, "if we do discover a complete theory" we could finally answer "why it is that we and the universe exist," then "we would know the mind of God" (1998:175). Indeed, the scientific description of the world has to be conceived as one that aims for a complete description of reality in terms of (efficient) causal explanations. Physics in particular, and science in general, aims to explain the *whole* of reality. On such a level, any religious "explanations" cannot be but disastrous. If science tries to explain the whole of reality, however, is there any room left to speak about God's action in the world? Could science maybe one day answer each and every question?

#### 3.1 Gödel's Theorem

Every scientific theory is constrained by the theories of lower levels of explanations: Psychological explanations are constrained by biology, biology is constrained by chemistry, chemistry by physics, and the like.<sup>11</sup> At the end of that chain, physics is constrained by mathematics. This is important, because mathematics itself cannot be proven to be self-consistent and complete. Certain parts of mathematics can, but not mathematics as a whole. Euclidean geometry, for

<sup>11</sup>Of course, this does *not* imply any reductionist assumption. It does not exclude distinct higher level properties; it only states that the higher level at each time has to obey the lower level rules. For there are, to be sure, also constraints from the top down: The psyche of human beings, for instance, exerts control on their bodies in every free act.

example, can be completely “axiomatized,” which means that there is a *finite* stock of axioms “from which all of the infinitely many truths of Greek geometry can be derived” (Moore 1991: 172).<sup>12</sup> Yet, what holds in geometry does not hold in other fields of mathematics, for it does not hold in set theory as the mathematician Kurt Gödel showed. According to Gödel, no single base of statements suffices for proving *all* truths in set theory (1991:173). Furthermore, it is generally impossible to prove from within a given system that the axioms used for that system are consistent (Davies 1992: 166). Hence, one can never find a single theoretical system explaining all possibly true statements—not even in mathematics. As Paul Davies puts it: “No rational system can be proved both consistent and complete” (167). If this holds even in mathematics, which constrains all other sciences, “then surely it is true for all other forms of rational human reasoning too” (van Huyssteen 1998: 71). This implies that any TOE could not account for its own validity. If consistency is accepted as a necessary condition for any description of reality, there can never be a rational system that is complete at the same time. Even from logical grounds, the concept of a TOE is limited in its explanatory power. Therefore, even if a TOE will be found one day, it will never *explain* reality *as a whole*, for *any* scientific account of reality is limited to those aspects of reality with which scientific methods can deal.

### 3.2 Contingencies

#### 3.2.1 General Contingency and Intelligibility of the World

It is important to realize that scientific investigation necessarily makes two “regulative assumptions” about the quality of the world. The world need not be at all, and it need not be orderly and intelligible (Barbour 1998: 90). Every scientific endeavor has to presuppose these two characteristics of the world, because, on the one hand, if the world were *not intelligible*, the very attempt to understand it would be senseless. It literally *could* not be understood. On the other hand, if the world were *not contingent* (but necessary), one would only need to know what is necessary to understand the world. Since all empirical reality is obviously not necessary but changeable and variable, such a rationalism tends to neglect the

<sup>12</sup>Cf. also Wentzel van Huyssteen (1998: 71), who uses this—as we will do soon—as an argument for the limits of scientific rationality. However, I submit van Huyssteen makes too much of a claim in saying that there “*therefore* exist unprovable truths” (*italics mine*). As Moore (173) says, we have “no reason to suppose” that “there is some true set-theoretical statement *s* such that, given any axiomatic base *A* for set theory, *s* cannot be proved using *A*.” It *might be* that there exist such unprovable truths, but this could not be inferred from Gödel’s theorem.



importance of empirical data. Consequently, science takes both the intelligibility and the contingency of reality as regulative assumptions.

Surely, these two regulative assumptions of science need not be *reflected* by scientists in order to keep the scientific enterprise going. Of course, one could simply say that these assumptions obviously work. However, since most scientists are critical realists they assume that their explanations of the world have in some way or another to do with reality. But, as we saw, one could argue that critical realism should not be restricted to the scientific realm. Hence, it would only be consistent to reflect upon the regulative assumptions and apply some kind of critical realism to them as well. If one understands critical realism as a broader epistemological attitude towards different kinds of experiences, an instrumentalist option (“it simply works”) would not be a very satisfying answer. Simply stating “science works anyhow” is certainly true, but it is not a sufficient rational answer if one seeks an interpretation of different kinds of experiences, some of which go beyond science.

### 3.2.2 Different Types of Contingencies

Having a closer look at the contingency of the world, one can, according to Barbour, distinguish four different types of contingencies as they appear from a scientist’s viewpoint (Barbour 1998: 211-2). They point to limitations of any scientific account of the world. We shall list the four types and shall ask in each case whether or not that particular contingency is likely to be explained or resolved by future scientific research.

i) Contingency of *laws*. Even a TOE would have to provide an answer to the question “why do we have ‘our’ set of natural laws?” Maybe scientists can show some day how everything in the world behaves according to a TOE. Then we would still not know whether or not that TOE would include the *only* possible set of laws. A TOE itself cannot be proven to be necessary.

This contingency cannot be resolved, simply because, according to Gödel, it will never be possible to prove a consistent and complete description of reality—a TOE—to be right.

ii) Contingency of *boundary conditions*. Moreover, any physical description of concrete reality consists of two basic components: a general regularity or natural law and boundary conditions. Only through the use the latter are scientists able to make predictions concerning concrete events. It is important to realize that no scientific theory itself accounts for these boundary conditions. The boundary conditions have to be added to the equations externally, either through measurement(s) or through another theory (which itself at some point

has to measure boundary conditions). This is usually not a problem in normal science, but what about the initial conditions of the universe as a whole? Stephen Hawking and Jim Hartle try to avoid the need of boundary or initial conditions of the universe by trying to explain the universe without a definite origin in time (Hawking 1988: 136, 141). Hawking himself stresses that this hypothesis is just a “proposal” (136), so it is not at all clear whether or not this would be possible. Maybe Hawking’s attempt will succeed and we will finally find a theory that can explain the initial conditions of the universe. In that case, the contingency of initial conditions would at least partially be reduced to the contingency of laws.<sup>13</sup> But still, if we ever find a theory that embraces the initial conditions, we still would not be able—according to Paul Davies—to prove such a theory as right (Davies 1992: 90).

iii) However, even supposing Hawking’s idea were true, he cannot answer the question: “What is it that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to describe” (Hawking 1988: 174)? That there is anything at all and not nothing is really a thrilling question, which is expressed by the contingency of *existence*. Why did the world that is described by contingent laws not only remain possible but actually become real? “Why does the universe go to all the bother of existing” (ibid.)?

The sheer existence of something can never be proven to be necessary. Even if there were only *one* possible TOE (which is unlikely)<sup>14</sup> so that we would know that if there ever were a universe, it would have such and such qualities, we could never prove why this had to become real. This is simply beyond the structure of our natural laws: they always presuppose the existence of their object.

iv) Finally, the contingency of *events* refers to the fact that not only the general structure and existence of the universe as a whole, but also events *in* the universe, are contingent. Currently, the discussion focuses on basically *two sources* of such contingencies: quantum phenomena and chaotic systems. Most physicists at the moment conceive quantum mechanical indeterminacy as an

<sup>13</sup>But the most that might be said would be that one does not need any certain initial conditions in the literal sense of the meaning, like certain values of energy or the like. Even supposing this could be achieved, the values of the *natural constants* are still not determined. This, however, might be seen as a feature of the natural *laws*. So, in the end, it might be that the contingency of initial conditions could—at least in principle—be reduced to that of laws. This diminishing importance of the distinction between initial conditions and laws on a cosmological level is also emphasized by Davies (91).

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Davies (170): “My conclusion, then, is that the physical universe is not compelled to exist as it is; it could have been otherwise.”



*intrinsic* ontological feature of nature, i.e., a source of contingent events. The well known question is whether or not there are “hidden variables” determining the outcome of (then only *apparently*) random quantum events (like the decay of a certain atomic nucleus). To date most physicists doubt such an intrinsic determinism and maintain a probabilistic interpretation (Polkinghorne 1989: 56-9).

There is still another source for the contingencies of events. Dynamic (chaotic) systems seem also to induce contingencies of events. The debate about the ontological status of chaotic indeterminacies and the relationship between the micro-world of quantum mechanics and the macro-world of deterministic chaotic systems is not yet decided (Kellert 1993).<sup>15</sup> One possible interpretation says that chaotic dynamics will indeed take the tiny indeterminacies of quantum-mechanical systems and stretch them into macroscopic variations (Kellert 1993: 73). In a way the chaotic system could function as a measurement apparatus for quantum systems by coupling with that system and amplifying unobservable micro-changes to a macroscopic level (*ibid.*).

Although this link between micro- and macro-world is still debated, even opponents of a close link between micro-world and macro-world assume that chaotic systems do exhibit ontological indeterminacies. Polkinghorne, for instance, also claims an ontological indeterminacy for chaotic systems, despite the fact that he is critical about the amplifying of quantum mechanical indeterminacies (Polkinghorne 1998: 48-75; Polkinghorne 1991: 34-48). Paul Davies considers this type of events even as another (fifth) category of contingencies (1992: 169-70). Therefore, it does seem that we have two kinds of sources for contingent events, chaotic systems and quantum phenomena.

The question concerning possible future research has to be answered slightly differently concerning this last kind of contingency, for it is still a controversial one. In fact, if there ever is contingency of events, we can *never be sure* about it. In order to see this, let us assume this interpretation were “true” in the sense that it would indeed be impossible to detect any regularity in random events. In that case we could never know for sure about this being true “ontological chance.” It does not even exclude the possibility of a strict *deterministic* algorithm. This can be seen by the following example: Consider a sequence of random numbers like

<sup>15</sup>The phrase “*deterministic* chaos” does not *per se* say anything about its ontological status. It only says that our treatment of these phenomena is a deterministic one, i.e., that we use classical (i.e., Newtonian) mechanics and not quantum mechanics for our calculations. This is a methodological restriction in order to be able to calculate.

415926535... Apparently, this sequence is randomly distributed. In fact, it satisfies all necessary conditions for random numbers.<sup>16</sup>

Yet it is still perfectly determinate, for these are digits of pi, starting with the second digit after the decimal point.

What does that imply for our context? Well, if you did not know about the existence of pi, but would find a sequence of, let us say, the first thousand digits of pi; if you only knew statistics, but no trigonometry or geometry, it could happen that you would believe that this is just a sequence of random numbers. It could be that you would never realize that this sequence follows a well-defined algorithm. Similarly, if this is conceivable even in this simple example, one can never exclude some sort of regularity (or even a strict algorithm) underlying those events that appear to be accidental in nature.

#### 4. THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS

##### 4.1 "Creation" as Explanation for Contingency and Intelligibility of the World

From a theological perspective the regulative assumptions of science, intelligibility, and contingency of the world are anything but vague and accidental, for they correspond to the Christian notion of creation. The Judeo-Christian notion of creation sees the order of the world ultimately grounded in God's rationality (Barbour 1998: 27-29). Torrance expresses this close link of the notion of creation and the concept of an orderly universe: "The doctrine of the One God, the Creator of all things visible and invisible, and the ultimate source of all order and rationality ... gave rise to the conception of the universe as one harmonious system of things characterized by one pervasive if multi-variable order throughout. This rational unity of the cosmos ... which is the correlate of Judeo-Christian monotheism, has ever since constituted one of the fundamental assumptions of all science: it is the ground of our confidence that wherever we may direct our inquiries we will find the universe accessible to rational investigation..." (Torrance 1981: 2-3).

At the same time the world is not seen as necessary, since it was created through God's sovereign will. "This concept of contingent order, however, ... is the direct product of the Christian understanding of the constitutive relation between God and the universe..." (70). From a Christian viewpoint the contin-

<sup>16</sup>"Perfectly random" can of course only be said for a long sequence of numbers, but let us assume that would be the case.



gency of the world reflects God's sovereignty. The world need not be at all and it need not be like it actually is. Rather, the world is the way it is, because God wanted it this way.

Of course, the fact that the Judeo-Christian concept of creation fits the regulative assumptions of science, and that it even contributed to the rise of science, does not prove its validity. Other "explanations" are possible—the simplest would be just to assume both as "given." But if one seeks comprehensive understanding of *all* reality, if one defends a critical realist approach not only for the strictly scientific realm, it does make perfect sense to look for a fitting counterpart at those points where science obviously faces an "inter"-face. The question then will be what "face" is on the other side.

#### 4.2 *Creatio ex Nihilo*

We can even go beyond the interpretation of the general contingency of the world and look out for more specific theological interpretations for each of the four types of contingencies mentioned above. As we said, science is not able to explain these contingencies. Shall we accept them simply as "given?" Ian Barbour draws theological parallels to each of these contingencies (Barbour 1998: 212-4). He sees theological parallels for the contingency of *existence* and the contingency of *boundary conditions* in the *creatio ex nihilo*, the doctrine of creation out of nothing. *Creatio ex nihilo* does not so much refer to an initial act, but expresses that the world is fundamentally dependent on God, who deliberately and freely chose to create the world as it is. That the world is, although it need not be, and that the boundary conditions of the universe made the development of life possible, is seen as grounded in God's deliberate and free choice to create a world that need not be (Torrance 1981: 3).

Is this theological interpretation of *creatio ex nihilo* an *explanation* for the contingencies of existence and of boundary conditions? Does theology offer her help to science? We saw that both the contingency of existence and the contingency of laws—to which, as we said, in the "worst case" the contingency of boundary conditions might be reduced—will never be solvable by science. One could either accept the contingencies as purely accidental, simply as "given," or one could "reduce" these contingencies by referring to God. However, is the reference to God, seen from a purely logical point of view, a helpful explanation? Is this a satisfying reduction of contingencies? For one could as well continue asking "who created God?" It is reminiscent of the story told by Stephen Hawking about the woman who interrupted an astronomer's lecture and declared that the world is a flat plate resting on the back of a giant turtle. When the

lecturer asked what the turtles rest upon, she replied “But it’s turtles all the way down” (Hawking 1988: 1)! I see no reason why the assumption to stop the regress within God would, on logical grounds *alone*, have *a priori* any more explanatory power than to accept the world as “given,” or as a result of “pure chance.” The question, however, is whether or not we remain content with pure logical grounds. I doubt we can.

Hence I see two options. Either we continue asking “where does this law, this regularity and the like come from,” even “where does God come from,” or we stop this process at some point by reference to a God who needs no further explanation. Christians believe this to be the Triune God, who is revealed in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. The “knowledge” about the Triune God, however, certainly does not come from reason, but from God’s revelation in Christ.

The Christian claim that God created the universe is not a “causal explanation,” because the notion of causality in science comes to its limits if one considers the universe as a whole. For “causality,” in the sense science uses it, presupposes time (or time is the condition for the possibility of change and causality). However, if there were no time, the notion of causality could not be applied. A “supernatural creation cannot be a causative act in time, for the coming-to-being of time is part of what we are trying to explain. If God is invoked as an explanation for the physical universe, then this explanation cannot be in terms of familiar cause and effect” (Davies 1992: 58). For that reason the Christian claim that the universe is created does not compete with scientific theories (for it is not a *causal* explanation), but rather with different metaphysical claims about the structure of ultimate reality. If one does seek a consistent and coherent explanation of the world and a satisfying interpretation of *all* experience, it will therefore be of crucial importance how reality as experienced in other realms of life fits into that explanatory scheme. I submit that seen from this perspective, the Christian viewpoint has much more to offer than, let us say, an agnostic one.

#### 4.3 *Creatio Continua* and God’s Action

To be sure, the conclusion just made is a very important achievement, for it clearly shows the limitations of any scientific description of reality and the legitimacy and explanatory power of a Christian view of reality. Nevertheless, that discussion remained on the level of presuppositions of the scientific enterprise and general conditions of the universe. What about any room for speaking about particular divine action and providence—without sliding back to a god-of-the-gaps? The



theological doctrine of the *creatio continua* expresses God's continuing creative action in the world, God's creative and orderly power. For that reason, Barbour relates this theological doctrine to the contingency of *laws* and the contingency of *events* named above (Barbour 1998: 213). Barbour sees the *creatio continua* as a theological expression of God's immanence and God's sustaining power. Since it is not at all a matter of course that the natural laws are continually valid, God is seen as the sustainer of the natural laws. Moreover, God is not only active as the "ground of being," but continually immanent in the process of the world and participating in it. We saw earlier that religious assertions must not be a substitute for causal explanations if a god-of-the-gaps should be avoided. However, what if the causal explanations that science seeks simply come to their *limit*? What if science itself could not provide a "*causal* explanation" for certain phenomena? We said that for the universe as a whole, causality indeed faces its limits. Something similar holds concerning the contingency of events.

#### 4.3.1 Quantum Mechanics

Before we give a theological interpretation of the contingencies of events, a preliminary remark is necessary: Besides the problems directly related to the god-of-the-gaps one has to be aware that any theological interpretation of scientific insights can only be provisional (for certainly the scientific insights themselves are). Therefore, it seems wise to interpret only relatively validated theories. At the same time, however, it is clear that theology has always been responding to culture, which includes nowadays especially science. I suppose there is nothing wrong with revising theological interpretations of concrete scientific results, as long as one makes clear that this interpretation is as provisional as those results are.

Among the contingencies named above, obviously the contingency of events is of particular interest for considering God's action in the world. We said that the god-of-the-gaps implies God competing with natural efficient causality and with explanations science will possibly search for. Yet, in the case of quantum events it seems that there simply *is no* causal explanation in the sense in which we usually use this phrase. According to the probabilistic interpretation of quantum mechanics, the quantum mechanical indeterminacies have "no cause" in the sense that there is no other physical entity determining the outcome of this event. This interpretation would state that there are no "hidden variables," no detectable parameters implicitly determining those events.

We saw that one can never be sure about the real nature of "random" events. It might be that there is an underlying structure behind what appears to be ran-

dom. That is conceivable even in the simple example given above (digits of pi), even in the realm of what physics already knows. It is also conceivable that there is an underlying regularity behind the apparently random events of quantum mechanics, which would never be detectable except in principle. Hence, one might very well see some kind of regularity due to God's action behind that which appears to be random. For this reason Robert Russel maintains: "If we interpret quantum physics in terms of ontological indeterminacy, we can conceive of God as *acting* in nature without violating the laws of nature, since according to these laws, nature provides a set of necessary causes, but this set is not sufficient to bring about the actual event" (Russel 1995: 23).

To refer to God in this context would not imply a god-of-the-gaps, *as long as one does not claim that this reference has any explanatory power on the level of efficient causality*. As long as one wants to avoid any god-of-the-gaps, it must not make any difference for the scientific theories whether one accepts random events as pure chance or sees some kind of divine action behind them. Again, this interpretation must make no difference on the causal level. It must not only be undetectable, but it must also not hinder the search for causal explanations. Only if these premises are strictly provided can one interpret random events theologically without being in danger of a god-of-the-gaps. In other words, if science says "this is due to chance and nothing else," the Christian might claim that ultimately this is not "pure" chance, but is also related to God's will for this creation, since God is Lord of all that is. However, is it not possible that some day "hidden variables" are found and that this interpretation has to be revised? It is possible. Yet, I do not think that this should make theologians refrain from giving any interpretation at all. First, since we can never be sure about the ontological status of chance, and second, since this interpretation of quantum mechanics has been validated and is accepted by the majority of physicists, a tentative theological interpretation seems very legitimate. Otherwise theology would have to withdraw from any such interpretation at any time, because one can never be sure about the ontological status of random events.

#### 4.3.2 Chaos Theory

Chaos theory reveals an exciting feature of nature, which can lead to a shift of our perspective on the world. In classical mechanics the orderly was normal, irregularities exceptional. God's action was seen either in the supernatural or in the whole structure of natural laws. Quantum mechanics revealed an underlying indeterminacy that induces contingency into the world. Nevertheless, this has barely had an influence on macroscopic events, because quantum mechanical phenomena



appear, at least normally, only on a micro-level (for statistical reasons, they are usually not relevant on a macroscopic level). Hence, using exclusively this sort of contingency for speaking of God's action would be implicitly reductionist. Chaotic systems, on the contrary, induce contingencies on the level of macroscopic events. Chaos theory reveals that we do not live in a world in which only the natural laws, actually or at least potentially known to us, dominate the process of the world. Rather, we live, as it were, on islands of order in an ocean of chaos. We are surrounded by contingencies built into the structure of the universe on very deep levels. As we said, any concrete description of events in nature entails both laws and boundary conditions. Chaos theory reveals the *crucial* importance of boundary conditions. Furthermore, any real physical system contains a *huge amount* of principally indeterminate, contingent boundary conditions.

Of course, this is not to say that simply "anything goes." "A chaotic system is not totally 'chaotic' in the popular sense, corresponding to absolutely random behavior" (Polkinghorne 1998: 52). Yet, it does point to the fragility of our world and to its sensitivity to boundary conditions. In addition, the boundary conditions are to a great extent influenced by what can only be seen from a scientific viewpoint as due to *chance*. Therefore, having grasped that one can never exclude some pattern or regularity behind that which appears to be random, a further theological interpretation is still possible. Therefore, chaotic systems, too, have been interpreted as related to divine action and providence. Polkinghorne suggests conceiving of God as giving information input in dynamical systems, i.e., "active information" to "exercise providential interaction with creation" (62). He draws on the effect that chaotic systems have numerous numbers of possible future states with the same energy (their phase space trajectories lead to different states but have the same energy).<sup>17</sup> "The 'choice' of path actually followed corresponds, not to the result of some physically causal act (in the sense of an energy input) but rather to a 'selection' from options (in the sense of an information input)," which enables God to "influence his creation in a non-energetic way" (Polkinghorne 1991: 45). Even scholars whose interpretation differs from Polkinghorne's conceive of chaos theory as providing room for God's action. Nancey Murphy argues that

<sup>17</sup>Cf. Polkinghorne 1998: 61-63; 1991: ch. 3. As mentioned before, Polkinghorne is critical of the influence of quantum mechanics on dynamical systems. I maintain, however, if one remains on the grounds of pure classical physics (without any quantum mechanics), the problem arises that phase space trajectories simply do not cross (which is of course due to causality). This means that even if adjacent states of a system lie infinitely close to each other, I see no chance that the system

the “real value of chaos theory for an account of divine action is that it gives God a great deal of ‘room’ in which to effect specific outcomes without destroying our ability to believe in the natural causal order” (Murphy 1997: 348).<sup>18</sup>

To be sure, this process of providential action warrants a more technical and detailed discussion. Does God, for instance, *determine* the outcome of events or just influence them (like the lure in process thought)? Certainly one has to account for the freedom of God’s creation. It also needs to be discussed whether one has to understand God as working in *every* quantum event and/or chaotic event or only *occasionally*. Furthermore, future research will have to answer the question to what extent quantum mechanical systems influence macroscopic chaotic processes. However, whether or not the contingency of chaotic phenomena is related to quantum mechanics, quantum mechanics and chaos theory reveal our daily world as being highly contingent and to a high degree inaccessible to science - *in principle*. It thus provides legitimate room for a theological interpretation of these contingencies by referring to God’s action and providence.

---

“jumps” from one phase space trajectory to another without any energy input. To violate this law would be similar to violating energy conservation. In pure classical mechanics even “active information” cannot change the system’s state without violating one of these rules. Hence I do maintain (among others, see Kellert above) quantum mechanics as being important for the ontological indeterminacy of chaotic events.

<sup>18</sup>Murphy (1997: 348) differs from Polkinghorne in the interpretation of the ontological status of chaotic events. Polkinghorne thinks chaotic processes reveal ontological openness, Murphy stresses the epistemological openness: “The room God needs is not space to work within a causally determined order—ontological room—but rather room to work within our perceptions of natural order—epistemological room.” I do not agree with her, because her position implies only a “pseudo”-freedom of humans. However, it might be that the question is unsolvable whether or not this is to be seen as an ontological or just an epistemological indeterminacy. For if you assume a Laplacean demon should calculate a totally deterministic system of the whole universe, it would get incredibly complicated. One could probably say that even for a comparatively small macroscopic system any exact calculation with the fastest computers imagined would take much longer than the age of our universe. That implies in a way that the universe simulates itself (cf. Davies/Gribbin 42). In other words: is it reasonable to uphold the distinction between epistemological and ontological indeterminacy in this case, if any calculation takes longer than the real system?



#### 4.4 God's Action at the Limits?

Does all this imply that God's action is restricted to the limits? Does this lead to a remote designer or a God who is only responsible for the temporal or spatial limits of our universe? Not at all! *For it is not only the limits of time and space at which science comes to its limits.* The concept of *creatio continua*, which interprets the contingency of laws and events, expresses God's ongoing involvement in the world and God's sustaining power. Moreover, the contingencies of events induced through quantum mechanical indeterminacies and chaotic phenomena reveal that we are living in a world which is to a very high extent contingent and therefore not accessible to the scientific description of reality. These "limits" of science are therefore almost everywhere present in our physical world: in comparatively simple (chaotic) physical systems as well as in larger phenomena like weather, in the sphere of biological systems and individuals as well as in the sphere of societies, stock markets, and the like. To say that God is working at the "limits" in the sense of this paper has to be understood solely methodologically in order to distinguish God's action from the efficient causality science describes. The "limits" are limits of the *methods of science* and have nothing to do with any limitation of God's action to a certain realm of nature (e.g., the Big Bang) or a limitation of God's power.<sup>19</sup> To "reduce" God's action to the limits in this way is to do nothing else but to take seriously the autonomy of science and the repudiation of any god-of-the-gaps, which is to be argued from both science and theology.

#### 5. OUTLOOK: NOT FILLING THE "GAPS" BUT CROSSING THE "GULF"

We more and more realize that even a TOE could not give a complete explanation of reality. To be sure, in principle, there are no gaps *in* the scientific account which could be filled by theology. If theologians want to avoid any god-of-the-gaps, they have to make sure that they do not conceive of God as working on the level of efficient causality. Nevertheless, there remains, even on a cognitive level, a fundamental "gulf" between the scientific description of the world and an overall account of reality as it is experienced in "the broader and richer setting of personal life" (Polkinghorne 1996: xi). This "gulf" has nothing to do with

<sup>19</sup>That is to say that the question of limitation of God's power is simply not addressed here. It would, of course, be at issue if we were to discuss the question, to what extent God influences quantum events, and whether or not God influences all of them and the like.

any kind of “gap” referred to in the god-of-the-gaps. For a sufficient explanation of this broader setting of life, however, that “gulf” between science and “the rest of life” must be bridged. The need for crossing this gulf becomes apparent by the fact that scientists raise limit questions which science itself cannot answer. In raising these questions, scientists have started building the bridge across the gulf, but they cannot finish it on their own. There is no way suggested by science itself as to how the framework of the scientific account of reality could fit into that “richer setting of personal life.” This fit has to be evaluated apart from scientific reasoning. That is not to say that science would not work without this fit. However, it does say that the scientific insights are “floating,” unless they are related to other dimensions of life, unless they are grounded in life. Surely this need not be a theological or religious grounding. No cogent proof of theological truth claims will ever be possible. Yet, in one way or another, everybody who strives for a rational explanation of reality needs to consider *both* the scientific account *and* the realm of personal life. Both consistency of theoretical ideas themselves and consistency between theoretical insights and the sphere of life need to be established for a rational explanation of *all* experience. The question at issue is therefore not how God would work in the gap (for in principle there is no gap), but how our metaphysical and religious traditions can cross the gulf between the scientific *description* and our *holistic experience* of reality. How can theological reflections be linked to the bridge already partly built by the limit questions raised by scientists? Only if this gulf is bridged, only if the “floating” scientific insights are grounded, will an integrated interpretation of all experience be possible.

Paul Davies is aware of the fact that “we are barred from ultimate knowledge, from ultimate explanation” (Davies 1992: 231). If we wish to progress beyond science, “we have to embrace a different concept of ‘understanding’ from that of rational explanation” (ibid.). He assumes that the “mystical path” is one possible solution. However, one may follow Wentzel van Huyssteen, who pointed out that Davies’ “mere choice for mystical ways of understanding is ultimately still not really satisfactory” (van Huyssteen 1998: 73). As a result of the forgoing thoughts, it should be clear that it indeed would not be satisfying to leave aside any rationality at the very point where science stops (as this is implied by Davies). If we seek a comprehensive explanation of *all our* experience, reflecting also, for instance, on the very possibility of science itself, we ought to seek rational ways to embrace also those aspects of life that might be of uttermost importance to us, despite the fact that they are not dealt with by science. If we are true psychosomatic unities, it is not reasonable to rely on rationality in the scientific



realm and turn totally away from any rational approach for the rest. Here is the place where the distinct qualities of theology become important. For “theology too is a distinct form of human knowledge, i.e., a distinct form of rational reflection on religious experience that not only could be markedly different from mysticism, but which could in fact, as a reasoning strategy, share important overlaps with the rationality of the natural sciences” (73).

Science seeks explanations by reducing different kinds of phenomena to the broader framework of a theory. The history of science appears as an ongoing process of reducing “accidental” events to laws, laws to theories and so on, until there might be only one TOE left. This reduces different kinds of contingent phenomena to ever fewer laws, and makes the outcome “necessary,” provided the theory and the boundary conditions are given. Nevertheless, we could see that this scientific account could not solve fundamental contingencies. To say that this chain of explanation does not continue forever, but stops within God, transfers the contingency of the world into God’s sovereignty. However, on pure logical grounds it is not *per se* a better explanation of the reality science describes than to assume God at that point where the “chain of turtles” stops. I submit that this demands the autonomy of science concerning its causal explanations. However, if there are strong evidences for believing in a reality that goes beyond what is detected by science, if one believes in a God who by God’s grace makes life in all its fullness possible, then it would be very reasonable to assume that the “chain of turtles” stops within God who needs no other explanation, for God is believed in as the ultimate reality. Happy are those who have the good fortune to believe that this ultimate reality is not only the cold ground of being but also has a personal face, namely the face of Christ.

The bridge across the gulf that separates the scientific account of reality from the broader setting of personal life is partly built by scientists, for they come to points where the proper boundaries of science make them stop *as* scientists. The other side of the bridge can be built by all sorts of religious or philosophical interpretations and *Weltanschauungen*. Christian theologians are called to build the bridge on this other side in order to render an intelligible description of the whole of reality as seen and experienced by the Christian community. As with any image, this one also has a shortcoming. Even once the bridge is built, there would still not be a secure and cogent path from science to theology. Reason does not replace revelation. Therefore, not everybody will see the specific *theological* contribution to such an explanation of reality as necessary, but in one way or another, everyone has to make metaphysical decisions. The god-of-the-gaps resulted in theology having an argu-

ment with science. Now, theology is rather to be seen as having an argument with other religious and philosophical traditions, with other *Weltanschauungen*, on the interpretation of the scientific account. There is no "Christian science." Nevertheless, there is need for a Christian interpretation of scientific explanations. This interpretation is closely linked to the valuations one makes elsewhere in life. Concerning this interpretation of the scientific account of reality and concerning the evaluation of life as experienced by oneself in community, Christians cannot help but compete with other interpretations, be they agnostic, pantheistic, or otherwise.

## REFERENCES

Barbour, Ian G.

- 1974 *Myths, Models, and Paradigms. A Comparative Study in Science and Religion.* New York: Harper & Row.
- 1990 *Religion in an Age of Science: The Gifford Lectures 1989-1991. Volume 1.* San Francisco: Harper&Row.
- 1998 *Religion and Science. Historical and Contemporary Issues.* San Francisco: SCM Press.

Brook, John Hedley

- 1991 *Science and Religion. Some Historical Perspectives.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Davies, Paul

- 1992 *The Mind of God. The Scientific Basis for a Rational World.* New York: Simon&Schuster.

Davies, Paul and Gribbin, John

- 1992 *The Matter Myth. Dramatic Discoveries That Challenge Our Understanding of Physical Reality.* New York: Simon&Schuster.

Hawking, Stephen

- 1988 *A Brief History of Time.* New York: Bantam.



Kellert, Stephen H.

- 1993 *In the Wake of Chaos. Unpredictable Order in Dynamical Systems.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Gould, Stephen J.

- 1999 *Rocks of Ages. Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life.* New York: Ballentine.

Moore, A.W.

- 1991 *The Infinite.* London: Routledge.

Murphy, Nancey

- 1997 Divine Action in the Natural Order, in *Chaos and Complexity. Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action.* ed. Robert J. Russel, Nancey Murphy, Arthur Peacocke. 325-57. Vatican State: Vatican Observatory Publications, 2nd ed. 1997.

Polkinghorne, John C.

- 1989 *The Quantum World.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- 1991 *Reason and Reality. The Relationship between Science and Theology.* Valley Forge: Trinity.
- 1993 Theological Notions of Creation and Divine Causality, in *Science and Theology. Questions at the Interface.* ed. by Murray Rae, Hilary Regan, John Stenhouse. 225-37. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- 1996 *Beyond Science. The Wider Human Context.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 1998 *Belief in God in an Age of Science.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Rolston, Holmes III

- 1987 *Science and Religion. A Critical Survey.* New York: Random House.
- 1999 *Genes, Genesis, and God. Values and Their Origins in Natural and Human History.* The Gifford Lectures 1997-1998. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Russel, Robert J.

- 1995      Theistic Evolution: Does God Really Act in Nature? in *Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences Bulletin*. Winter 1995: 19-32.

Tipler, Frank J.

- 1994      *The Physics of Immortality. Modern Cosmology, God and the Resurrection of the Dead*. New York: Doubleday.

Torrance, Thomas F.

- 1981      *Divine and Contingent Order*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

van Huyssteen, J. Wentzel

- 1997      Critical Realism and God. Can There Be Faith after Foundationalism? in *Essays in Postfoundationalist Theology*, ed. by W. van Huyssteen, 40-52. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- 1998      *Duet or Duel. Theology and Science in a Postmodern World*. Harrisburg: Trinity.



## “Be Mindful, Yah Gracious God” Extra-biblical Evidence and Josiah’s Religious Reforms

BRYAN D. BIBB

THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOK OF SECOND KINGS RELATES A REMARKABLE story in which the king of Judah discovers an ancient scroll, neglected for generations, containing the law of Moses. That king, Josiah, used the book as a foundation for sweeping changes to the religious landscape of his kingdom at the end of the seventh century BCE. Second Kings 22–23 tells how the king removed all sorts of images and practices that ran counter to the expressed will of God. For scholars attempting to reconstruct the history of ancient Israelite religion, this story is of central importance. The religious vision in the Old Testament revolves around two key theological assertions: that Yahweh is the one God alone, and that he must be worshipped purely—without idolatrous images. The Bible presents a picture in which the Israelites continually struggled with this religious vision, alternating between periods of apostasy and repentance. Josiah’s reformation of the cultic institutions in Judah is a pivotal moment in that whole history. As scholars reconstruct the religious history of ancient Israel, it is very important to know the extent to which this biblical report of Josiah’s reform is based in historical reality, or whether it is a fable that idolizes a great king of the past.

Evaluating the reports of royal activity is always a difficult undertaking, but it is complicated here by the religious dimension of Josiah’s actions. The reign of Josiah came at a time when Judah was emerging from the domination of the Assyrian imperialist regime. A common way of seeing Josiah’s reformation has been to interpret it as an act of political rebellion against the Assyrians, a statement of independence from the overlords and the symbols of their oppression. Indeed, there are indications that the Assyrians used religion as one arm of their imperialist policy. Thus, Josiah’s changes in the religious practices of Judah

were a kind of declaration of independence, a statement that Judah was directing its own internal affairs. There are also scholars who claim that Josiah's reformation was an expression of genuine national repentance for sin, and was something akin to a Great Awakening in the land. They say that the reform grew out of an emergent religious consciousness, a renewed awareness of God's unique power in the cosmos. In truth, religious and political aspects of society are never so distinct. The changing religious environment was directly related to the institution of the monarchy, and changed with the fortunes of the monarchs themselves. However, even though the history of Israelite religion is a thoroughly political reality, the people involved certainly had genuinely religious convictions and motivations. It would be reductionistic to assume that Josiah's reform grew out of merely one sort of personal and national aspiration.

The biblical account of Josiah's reformation presents it as primarily a religious action. Is there a way for the historian to evaluate this claim? If there was a religious reformation at the time of Josiah, these changes should be apparent in the material culture as evidenced in the archaeological record. By looking at the official sanctuaries and officially sanctioned religious imagery at the time, it may be possible to discern a change in the religious institutions. The religious changes were not confined to the monarch alone, however. The biblical text certainly focuses on the king's actions, but it says in 2 Kings 23:3 that all of the people joined the king in the new covenant with Yahweh. If this is true, there should be traces of this shift toward aniconic worship (i.e., without images) of the one God. Is there any indication of a change from iconic worship, whether polytheistic or Yahwistic, to a faith based on the aniconic worship of the one God, Yahweh? The evidence presented in this study has all been discussed in this connection before. There are no new and staggering revelations to be had. The analysis therefore addresses a higher, methodological question. What is the relationship between biblical and extra-biblical evidence in reconstructing the history of ancient Israel? Is it ever possible to consider the extra-biblical evidence without already forming the research in light of the biblical portrait? What should the scholar do when the extra-biblical evidence is inconclusive? Does any of this analysis help one sort out the religious and political dimensions of royal cultic reform? This study will begin by looking more closely at the biblical story, considering whether the historian may take its religious nature into serious consideration. The second section will pull together extra-biblical evidence that supports the biblical claim that there was a genuine religious shift during this period. Finally, the paper will draw some methodological conclusions about the task of the historian and the nature of historical knowledge.



## THE NATURE OF JOSIAH'S REFORM

According to 2 Kings 22–23, when Josiah had been reigning for eighteen years, but was still only 27 years old, he learned from his secretary Shaphan ben Azaliah that the high priest had found in the temple a copy of the book of the law. After having the book read to him, the king realized that his ancestors had not been following the commands of this law, and he knew that his nation stood under condemnation. Confirming his suspicions, Huldah the prophet announced that God was planning to destroy the people because they had worshipped other gods and idols. So Josiah gathered all of the important people in Jerusalem and read the book of the law to them, and renewed the covenant between the Lord and the people. The next step was to eliminate all of the offensive practices. Focusing heavily on the Jerusalem area, he ordered the priests to remove from the temple all of the objects related to Asherah, Baal, and the astral deities, and he burned them outside the city. He extended this purging to the sanctuaries in the local area and did away with the heterodox cultic personnel. He destroyed the Tophet altar, on which parents had sacrificed their children, he removed the horses that had been dedicated to Shamash, and he pulled down the extra altars in the Temple area.

Josiah's actions did not cease when he had finished with the Jerusalem precinct. He also gathered all of the legitimate priests into Jerusalem and "desecrated" the southern sanctuaries from Geba to Beersheba. He destroyed the high place at Bethel and desecrated its altar, and even destroyed and removed all of the high places in the towns of Samaria. Furthermore, he got rid of the mediums, household gods, idols, and all of the detestable things found in Judah. As a grand finale, Josiah ordered that the whole land should celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. The text says that no other king compared to Josiah in his commitment to serve the Lord with all of his heart, soul, and strength (2 Kings 23:25).

When evaluating the historical realities behind such a story, there are two different kinds of evidence that one may use. On one hand there are texts "that were produced in the course of the events as they were happening" (Knauf 1991:46). These may be reports, annals, letters, or original stories. Secondly, there are texts "that were produced after the events in an attempt to clarify for future generations how things were thought to have happened" (ibid.). Herbert Niehr, in his contribution to *Jeremia und die deuteronomistische Bewegung*, applies the first category of evidence to archaeological finds that witness to the events directly (1995:36). In the case of Josiah's reform, he says that the search for pri-

mary evidence is “clever,” but we must finally admit that there is no strong evidence. For Niehr, however, this by itself does not disprove the historicity of the account (41). Rather, he says that through careful analysis of the biblical material and of the historical period, the scholar can make decisions about what aspects of the account are historical and which are not. Niehr begins by examining Judah’s precarious political situation, wedged between the great powers Assyria and Egypt. As Assyria declined in influence Judah was able to expand and consolidate power in Jerusalem. He argues that the “reform” of Josiah originally consisted of summoning the priests to Jerusalem and destroying the sanctuaries in the southern region (2 Kings 23:8a). This was a purely political move, part of the power centralization that had been going on since the eighth century, and was not part of any sweeping cult reform, even one with political motivations. Josiah wanted to stabilize his lordship over Judah, so he brought the functioning of the sanctuaries under his control and inserted royal officials into his districts to administer his rule (49). Niehr believes that this limited activity explains why Josiah’s “reform” does not figure in later royal accounts or in the prophetic material. Niehr’s final conclusion is that the cult reform of Josiah as it is reported in 2 Kings cannot be proven and even qualifies as historically improbable. He says that later authors used the notice in 2 Kings 23:8a in order to create the “fiction of a late pre-exilic cultic reform and purification” (51). In post-exilic times, as they faced foreign infiltration, the Deuteronomists created a non-Canaanite religious history for Israel and legitimated the Jerusalem temple as the sole Yahwistic sanctuary.

In his response to Niehr’s article, Christoph Uehlinger counters that Niehr has too easily dismissed the Josianic actions as purely political or economic (1995:58). There was certainly some religious motivation behind Josiah’s reform as well. Uehlinger has more confidence about the ability of archaeology to help us reconstruct a general picture of the religious world at that time. We can thus formulate a hypothesis about the general development of the religion from the eighth to the sixth century, and then inquire about which parts of this could be attributed to Josianic reform (61). Following the work of Uehlinger and others, the next section of this paper will attempt to paint a portrait of the religious climate in Judah from the earlier years of the monarchy until the end of Judah. There is some evidence for a general shift from iconographic and dispersed worship to a more aniconic, centralized religious identity. Although one may not be able to attribute causality to the “reform” of Josiah, can archaeological investigation lend credibility to the Deuteronomist’s claim that a religious reform took place in the final years of the seventh century?



## ARCHAEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS REFORM

In his “archaeological commentary” on 2 Kings 22–23, William Dever (1994) shows that Judah during the united monarchy and beyond was heavily influenced by the religious climate of the region. He addresses each of the practices that the text condemns, attempting to “illuminate” the biblical text and provide “a more fundamental *archaeologica veritas*, a notion of how it really was in the past” (146). This section of the paper will address the evidence that Dever and others bring to bear on the religious climate of the period in order to discern any shift toward monotheistic, aniconic worship. The three categories of archaeological evidence that are pertinent to this discussion are cultic sites, epigraphic blessing formulae, and iconography. For each of these categories, we will consider whether there is any indication that religious practices were shifting toward the kind of faith advocated in the Josianic reformation.

## Cultic sites

Researchers have found many cultic sites throughout Judah and Israel, dating from every historical period. In *Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Biblical Research*, Dever lists the primary cultic installations that have increased our understanding of biblical “high places” and shrines (1990:128–40). From the twelfth century, he lists the “bull site” east of Dothan, and the altar on Mt. Ebal. The ninth century cultic site at Dan is our best example of a “high place,” a large outdoor altar complete with stone steps and cultic vessels. There have also been several discoveries of household incense altars and small shrines with collections of vessels, figurines, and small altars. The finds in Lachish Cult Room 49, Samaria locus E 207, and the large cache of cultic objects found by Kathleen Kenyon in Jerusalem all fit broadly within the Israelite period. These sites show that from the earliest period there was a great amount of religious localization, that is, religious practices tied to specific places, each with its own form of worship.

An important question regards the kinds of religious practices that these sites indicate. In each of these local sites, researchers have found a large number of vessels, altars of varying size, and figurines (Holladay 1987:252–66). These finds suggest that there was a basic continuity of worship activities. However, within this basic pattern, there is an astonishing array of different vessels, architecture, and figurines. The two discoveries at Samaria Locus E 207 and at Jerusalem Cave 1 provide good examples of the kind of religious practices that took place at these cultic sites. In the Samaria cache, there were numerous figurines includ-

ing 26 females, 34 horses, and 83 bovines. In addition, there were many items related to the preparation and serving of food, and the remains of many lamps. Jerusalem Cave 1 contained 1200 pottery vessels, 38 models of quadrupeds, and 21 “horse and rider” figurines. Many of these items may not have had any cultic use at all, but the remains of animal bones in some of the pots suggest that the worshippers had placed their ritual offerings in this cave.

With regard to the zoomorphic figurines, their function remains a mystery, but it is tempting to associate the horse and rider figures with the presence of Assyrian horse motifs at this time. Second Kings 23:11 says that Josiah “removed from the entrance to the temple of the Lord the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the Lord.” The presence of horse and rider figurines in cultic settings as well as this obscure reference to horses at the entrance to the temple testify to a connection between religion in Assyria and Israel at this time. Uehlinger proposes that we should interpret this reference in light of the Assyrian *tamitu* ritual in which a horse rode through the sanctuary dedicated to Adad and Shamash (1995:74–7). In contrast to Spieckermann (1982), Uehlinger argues that these horses had a definite religious connotation and were not simply symbols of Judah’s civil status as an Assyrian province. He constructs a history of Yahwism in which Yahweh had begun as a storm-god, but later became the local sun-god of Jerusalem. By the end of the eighth century, this sun god aspect had taken on royal connotations (69). Under the influence of the Assyrian cult of the sun-god Shamash, Yahweh as the sun-god became associated with horse and rider imagery. This is what led to the horses being established in the temple. However, when Assyrian power was waning, Josiah removed the horses as remnants of an obsolete political and religious connection. Thus, the removal was not primarily political but also had definite religious import. Even if one is not convinced by Uehlinger’s association of Yahweh with Shamash, it seems correct that sun god imagery influenced Israelite perception of Yahweh. It also seems probable that the horses in the temple had some connection with this same Shamash imagery.<sup>1</sup>

Is there any evidence that Josiah limited and centralized these cultic institutions? If Josiah took the kinds of actions described in 2 Kings 22–23, then it seems reasonable to assume that remnants of this revolutionary change would

<sup>1</sup> G. Barkay says that many of these horse figurines have solar disks on their heads, which relates them to the cult of the sun god. Furthermore, they appear to have been deliberately broken, with breaks “occurring unnaturally in the thicker parts of the body. There are also signs of deliberate dismembering and defacement” (1992b:362).



persist in the archaeological record. However, there is in fact no evidence that Josiah destroyed any cultic places or centralized the religious institutions at all. For a time, some scholars believed that there was evidence of cultic purification by Josiah at Arad and Beersheba. In recent years, however, this idea has been roundly criticized, particularly with reference to Arad. In his excavations at Arad in the 1960's, Yohanan Aharoni discovered a Judean fort that included the only extant example of an actual temple in Judah. He argued that the sanctuary had been violently destroyed at the end of the seventh century, thereby confirming the report in 2 Kings (Aharoni 1993:75–87). David Ussiskin reevaluated the stratigraphy and showed that Aharoni's dating of the end of the shrine with Stratum VII (seventh century) was based on his incorrect dating of a single wall (1988:142–57). This casemate wall of the fort passes over the ruined cella of the shrine, and several scholars have suggested that the casemate wall in fact dates to the Hellenistic–Roman periods. The earlier, solid wall of the fort served in fact until its destruction at the end of Stratum VI. This means, in essence, that the shrine was not destroyed in the seventh century but at the same time as the whole fort in the sixth century. Therefore, the destruction of the shrine cannot be associated with the religious reforms of either Hezekiah or Josiah.

Aharoni made a similar argument about the destruction of the large stone altar at Beersheba (1975:154–6). The altar was disassembled and its stones incorporated into the walls of a storehouse. The storehouse was destroyed at the end of the eighth century. Aharoni argued that the repair of the building and the destruction of the altar were during the reign of Hezekiah. Yigael Yadin (1976), however, argued that the altar's destruction should in fact be dated to the time of Josiah. Yadin's argument does not hold, however, because Beersheba was hardly in existence during the time of Josiah (Vaughn 1999:72). With these two sites ruled out, there is no direct evidence that Josiah destroyed any cultic places.

### Blessing formulae

There are a few extra-biblical texts that contain a type of prayer one may call "blessing formulae."<sup>2</sup> These texts provide another way of discussing the possibility of a shift in religious ideology because they are among the rare extra-biblical texts that make a theological claim. All of the blessing formulae found in Judah are Yahwistic in that they confer a blessing on someone *by Yahweh*. There are two finds that show that the Yahwistic faith could be different from the

<sup>2</sup> All translations of epigraphic material in this essay are the author's, except where noted.

monotheistic religion envisioned by the Deuteronomists. At Kuntillet Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom, the prayers mention Yahweh alongside “his Asherah,” a phrase that has generated fervent discussion among biblical scholars.

In the southern desert site of Kuntillet Ajrud, a caravan-stop on the way to the gulf of Elat, Ze’ev Meshel found a room that appears to have served as a small sanctuary dating to the eighth century BCE (1979:24–35). There were several Phoenician and Hebrew inscriptions on the walls, plus two large clay urns with drawings and inscriptions in ink. These inscriptions have not been fully published, but their importance for the history of Yahwism is undisputed.

There are several inscriptions from Kuntillet Ajrud, dating from the early part of the eighth century, that relate to our current discussion. The debate centers around the nature of Yahwism at the site. Was Yahweh worshipped alone as the only God, or was Yahwistic worship combined with that of other gods? These inscriptions have particular significance because they show that Yahweh had specific local manifestations, and that Yahweh was associated with something called “Asherah,” perhaps a goddess. The first blessing seems to be a kind of communication: “Thus says PN: Say to Yehalyaw and to Yau’asah and to PN, ‘I bless you by Yahweh of Samaria and by his Asherah.’” The second one is similar: “Says Amaryaw, ‘Say to my lord, “Is it well with you? I bless you by Yahweh of Teman and by his Asherah. May he bless you and keep you and be with my lord.”’” There are two more inscriptions that are more fragmentary but complement the first two. One says, “...by Yahweh of Teman and his Asherah...and may Yahweh grant him according to his desires.” It is interesting that this text mentions the Asherah in the first part, but then has Yahweh as the sole agent in the second phrase. Similarly, an inscription on a large stone bowl contains the name of the owner and the phrase, “blessed be he by Yahweh.” Even though the Asherah appears several times it is not a requirement for blessing, and Yahweh is the primary agent of blessing in these inscriptions.

There has been vigorous discussion about what is actually intended by the phrase, “Yahweh and his Asherah” (Emerton 1999). The excavators and others since have interpreted the term Asherah to refer to some kind of cultic installation. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the term “Asherah” has a third-person suffix, “his,” which is never appended to a proper name in the Bible. Also, in the Bible the “asherah” refers usually to a wooden pole erected in Yahwistic sanctuaries, not to the goddess Asherah herself. The wooden pole serves as an emblem of Yahweh’s presence at the site. At Kuntillet Ajrud, however, the inscriptions accompany a drawing of three figures with imagery associated with Asherah, the female goddess. The drawings have a disputed connec-



tion with the text of the inscription. There are several interpretive possibilities here. The text and the drawing may go together and refer to a goddess Asherah, the consort of Yahweh. Or, the text may only refer to a cultic symbol associated with Yahweh. In this case the drawing would be either an unconnected image or a later (mis)interpretation of the text. In any case, the Yahwism expressed in these two inscriptions runs counter to the religious vision of Josiah's reform, which removed all foreign gods from the cult, and eliminated all cultic objects from worship, including the asherah poles.

Jeffrey Tigay has argued that even if the text refers to a divine consort of Yahweh, it derives from a peripheral site in the far south, and we should not take it to be representative of mainstream Yahwism (1987:173–6). However, geographic location does not necessarily determine ideological marginality. In addition, there is a site with a parallel inscription in the heart of Judah, known as Khirbet el-Qom. Researchers have recovered a burial inscription that was removed illegally from a cave in this area (Dever 1981). It may be dated to the last quarter of the eighth century, a bit later than the inscriptions at Kuntilet Ajrud but earlier than Josiah. The main inscription reads: “[Belonging to] Uriyahu. Be careful of his inscription. Blessed by Uriyahu by Yahweh, // for from his enemies by his Asherah he has saved him // ... and his Asherah.” The text is quite difficult to read because the wall of the cave has many cracks, and it seems that the author of the inscription intentionally made extra letters, perhaps for artistic effect. In any case, scholars are generally agreed that the text mentions Yahweh and his Asherah.

If these two sites show a kind of Yahwism contrary to the Deuteronomistic vision supported by Josiah, are there any texts after Josiah that conform to that vision? There are, in fact, two epigraphic examples of blessing formulae that stand in contrast to the ones at Ajrud and el-Qom. In a burial chamber in Ketef Hinnom, Gabriel Barkay (1992a) found two small scrolls of silver leaf containing blessing inscriptions dating paleographically to the early sixth century. The text is close to the priestly blessing in Num. 6:24–6. The text of the first inscription reads, “May Yahweh bless you and keep you, and make his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you.” Similarly, the second blessing reads, “May Yahweh bless you and keep you and make his face shine upon you and give you peace.”

Another important set of inscriptions comes from a cave in Khirbet Beit Lei, 8 km east of Lachish (Naveh 1963). There are drawings on the wall of the cave, including the representation of three human figures, one holding a lyre and one praying. The texts and pictures in this cave probably come from the very end of the monarchy, and perhaps the people responsible for them were

hiding from the encroaching Babylonian army in 587. In any case, the trust in the mercies and power of God is striking. There are three inscriptions. The first says, "Yahweh is the God of all the earth// The Mountains of Judah belong to the God of Jerusalem." This text emphasizes the universality of Yahweh and his creating functions, and shows that Yahweh had a close connection to Jerusalem. The second inscription reads, "Be Mindful, Yah Gracious God; Absolve, Yah Yahweh,"<sup>3</sup> and the final one reads simply, "Deliver, Yahweh!" We should not over-interpret these inscriptions in contrast to those of Ajrud and el-Qom. However, they do indicate that Yahwism as it is preserved in the Bible, in its relatively monotheistic variety, did inform the religious beliefs of people in the sixth century. In comparison to the earlier inscriptions mentioning the Asherah, one can argue for a shift toward monotheism that is complete by the early part of the sixth century.

### Iconography

Finally, the argument that has attracted the most attention is the observation by Keel and Uehlinger that the iconographic seals from the eighth and seventh centuries show a high level of foreign influence, particularly regarding the worship of astral deities (Keel and Uehlinger 1998:294–323). However, as the iconography moves into the sixth century, there is a marked tendency toward aniconism; that is, a rejection of iconographic images with religious meaning.

First, there is a wide range of iconic symbols used in the seals of the earlier period, both with and without textual elements. These figures include representations of enthroned gods, a possible rendering of the mother goddess, perhaps even the Queen of Heaven herself (Ackerman 1989, Uehlinger 1991:276), and various animal imagery with religious significance. The beetle scarabs are particularly interesting because of the beetle's association with the sun god. One seal is an interesting variation showing a beetle with a female head (Sass 1993). In addition to seals, there are motifs of astral deities and animals on ivories found at Samaria, dating to the ninth century (Crowfoot and Crowfoot 1938). The Samaritan Ivories are important because their owners certainly belonged to the wealthy class of society, and so the religious elements cannot be written off as "folk religion." It was surely not a casual event to purchase an ivory carving.

In the later period there was a move away from iconic seals (with pictorial representations) to seals with only text or with text and a stylized border. Ben-

<sup>3</sup> This translation is by Patrick D. Miller (1981:328).



jamin Sass says that in the eighth century, there was a 4:1 ratio of iconic seals to aniconic (1993:198). However, the two main groups of seals from the sixth century have a very low proportion of iconic seals (Shiloh 1986, Avigad 1986). At the same time when animal and god representations were subsiding, there emerged a tradition of stylized borders and decorations using plant and vegetable motifs. This shift away from iconic representations of deities toward aniconic seals with only text or simple plant imagery occurred roughly during the period of Josiah's reign. This is the clearest evidence that there was a cultural shift toward a purer form of Yahwism that excluded iconic representations.

### PROBLEMS WITH THIS APPROACH

As has become clear already, there are many problems with developing an argument that looks for significant cultural changes around a specific time period. Culture in general, and religion in particular, is extremely complex and dependent on too many variables. The interpretation of the smaller piece of evidence within the larger context is always provisional. In fact, in surveying the archaeological discussions over the years, one finds that a particular reconstruction has a very short life span. When researchers discover a new piece of evidence, or reinterpret the stratigraphy of an existing dig, there are many prior arguments that no longer remain tenable. For example, Aharoni developed a persuasive interpretation of the Arad sanctuary, describing its use in the seventh century and its violent destruction by Josiah. However, his argument finally rested in his interpretation of a single wall, and Ussiskin's reinterpretation of that element rendered a quite attractive argument completely obsolete. One can separate the difficulties with making an archaeological argument such as this into three categories.

First, there is the problem of evidence. The various pieces of evidence presented in this paper are uneven in their significance and in their coverage of the period in question. In other words, the comparisons that we make between evidence of an earlier period and that of a later period are often quite tenuous. We have a plethora of zoological and female figurines from the early years of the monarchy that suggest a lively religious culture. However, how can we compare that situation with the later period? It is not methodologically sound to say something like, "Whereas there were many zoological cultic figures in the early period, there were none in the period of Josiah." To begin with, the dating of these finds is difficult because many of them have been found in caves and

trenches with little firm stratigraphy. Also, this is essentially an argument from silence. Another example of this uneven comparison is the juxtaposition of the Ajrud/ el-Qom inscriptions with the Beit Lei/ Ketef Hinnom inscriptions. It is true that in these we see a distinction between calling on Yahweh with his Asherah and calling on Yahweh alone. However, this does not mean that everyone worshipped Asherah in the early period, or that no one did in the later period. With such a small sample, it could possibly be that the Ajrud inscriptions represent a fringe group on the outside of society, but later their ideas caught on like wild fire and we just haven't found any evidence of it. Thus, we can only speak with caution about any *shift* or *development* from one stage to the other.

The second difficulty is the problem of interpretation. Even when there is a reasonable amount of evidence, there is no guarantee that we have interpreted it correctly. The classic example is the Asherah inscriptions at Ajrud. Jeffrey Tigay (1987:174) has pointed to some of the difficulties with interpreting this inscription as a representation of mainstream worship of the goddess Asherah. Dever's interpretation is strengthened by the presence of the drawings, but his interpretation of them is not totally secure. How do we know that the drawings have anything to do with the inscription?

The third difficulty is the problem of religion. When we attempt to interpret religious artifacts, it is important to distinguish between official, non-official, and private devotional activities. Josiah could in fact have instituted certain changes to official religious practices like those at the national sanctuaries in Arad, Beersheba, and Jerusalem. However, that does not guarantee that his changes had any effect on non-sanctioned local cultic sites or on private, home-based religious practices. This distinction works in the opposite direction as well. The Bible presents the religion in Israel and Judah during the monarchy to be primarily syncretistic and idolatrous. The prophets and reforming kings are constantly battling the influence of Baalism and other non-Yahwistic faiths. Jeffrey Tigay (1986) has argued very persuasively that popular religion was not nearly as idolatrous as the Bible presents. It may well be that during the reigns of Ahab and Manasseh, the two most idolatrous Judean kings, the official religion was terribly syncretistic while popular religion was a purer type of Yahwism.<sup>4</sup> John Holladay (1987) divides the evidence into these three helpful categories, and his analysis shows how we must be careful about how we coordinate various kinds of religious data. The sanctuaries at Arad and Beersheba

<sup>4</sup> Consider the Bible's condemnation of Manasseh, Josiah's grandfather: "He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, following the abominable practices of the



are clearly official cultic sites, and these two sites were obviously the first places to look for Josianic activity. Beyond the data from “established” religion, we must rely on “non-conformist” manifestations of religious belief. The caravan station at Kuntillet Ajrud and the cultic paraphernalia from Samaria Locus E 207 and Jerusalem Cave 1 probably represent such local clustering of non-official religion. Finally, the burial inscriptions at el-Qom and Ketef Hinnom represent private religious beliefs. One must be extremely careful in comparing data from these different life situations.

### CONCLUSION: A RETURN TO THE SECONDARY

This archaeological survey has attempted to bring together diverse evidence relating to the Judean cult around the time of Josiah. It is possible to interpret this evidence as indicating a general shift in religious climate, some of it pointing to a change during Josiah’s reign. However, the evidence is nothing more than suggestive within the framework of the question as we posed it above. This archaeological and epigraphical data can only establish the historical possibility that such a reform took place. The analysis of this data can only function in connection with a close examination of the biblical texts with form, source, and tradition critical tools (Eynikel 1996, Lohfink 1987). Comparing the two different accounts with each other and with passages such as Deuteronomy 12, in which the Deuteronomist describes pure Yahwistic worship without foreign influence, may help establish those aspects that are most central to the account (Reuter 1993). Further, by applying ideological analysis to the texts, we may be able to show where there is post-exilic influence in the story of Josiah’s reform.

In their attempt to make reasoned judgments about the historicity of biblical narratives, scholars often face the problems that we have encountered here. The archaeological evidence is scattered and somewhat thin, which means that some deductive framework is required to place the individual pieces into a coherent whole. This situation is unacceptable for some, but for those who are interested in saying something constructive on the subject it is often the best that we can do. Nevertheless, dissenting voices such as those of L. K. Handy of-

---

nations that the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. For he rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he erected altars for Baal, made a sacred pole, as King Ahab of Israel had done, worshiped all the host of heaven, and served them” (2 Kings 21:2–3).

ten serve as valuable critical partners in the dialogue. Handy says, "to date there is nothing which has been excavated from Syria-Palestine which can be taken as evidence for Josiah's reform without dubious scholarly gymnastics pirouetting precariously on the balance beam of Josiah's reform precisely as presented in 2 Kings" (1995:261). There is no reason why scholars should not engage in this balancing act, as long as it is done in a spirit of honesty and openness to new discoveries. The motivation should not be to defend a particular view of the Bible or to "prove" an event happened as depicted in the Bible. Rather, scholars should be interested in putting together hypotheses and supporting them with all of the available evidence, for the critical examination of other scholars. The purpose of this enterprise is to understand better the historical and theological world that produced the Bible. The slightest gains in knowledge can be important. Handy's negative statement serves as a call for further research and analysis, and need not lead to historical nihilism.

Finally, in an attempt to say something constructive, it is unlikely that the entire story of Josiah's reform is a fifth century fiction. Niehr argues that the only historically true element in the account is that Josiah brought the priests to Jerusalem as part of a political reorganization. He has failed to take into account, however, that religion is an integral part of cultural change and cannot be excluded in favor of political motivations. The archaeological evidence presented in this paper has shown, at the very least, that religious images and theological expressions were at the heart of Judean culture. Any royal action was political by definition; however, any decision that involved Judah's national identity was necessarily religious as well. While the archaeological evidence cannot *prove* that Josiah conducted religious reforms, the finds are basically consonant with such a reform. If one analyzes the biblical account of the reform in light of other biblical literature and with all possible tools, then the archaeological data may be seen as one piece of a broader argument about the religious nature of Josiah's actions. Archaeology provides a unique picture of the various forms of religious life during the monarchy, but the evidence is finally too sparse to support a single, clear-cut pattern. When all things are said and done, one's arguments about Josiah's reform must ultimately derive from a critical reading of the biblical traditions. This reading, then, may be supported by historical knowledge of the region and time, including that gained from archaeological research.



## REFERENCES

Ackerman, Susan

- 1989 "‘And the Women Knead Dough’: The Worship of the Queen of Heaven in Sixth-Century Judah." In *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*, ed. Peggy L. Day, 109-24. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Aharoni, Yohanan

- 1975 "Excavations at Tel Beer-Sheba: Preliminary Report of the Fifth and Sixth Seasons: 1973-1974." *Tel Aviv* 2:146-68, plates 25-36.

Aharoni, Yohanan, et al.

- 1993 "Arad." In *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, vol. I, 75-87. Ed. Ephraim Stern. New York and Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.

Avigad, Nahman

- 1986 *Hebrew Bullae from the Time of Jeremiah: Remnants of a Burnt Archive*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.

Barkay, Gabriel

- 1992a "The Priestly Benediction on Silver Plaques from Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem." *Tel Aviv* 19:139-92.
- 1992b "The Iron Age II-III." In *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*, ed. Amnon Ben-Tor. Trans. R. Greenberg, 302-73. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Crowfoot, John W. and Grace M. Crowfoot

- 1938 *Samaria-Sebaste 2: Early Ivories from Samaria*. London: Palestine Exploration Fund.

Dever, William G.

- 1969-1970 "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet el-Qom." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 40-41: 139-204.

1990 *Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Biblical Research*.  
Seattle: University of Washington Press.

1994 "The Silence of the Text: An Archaeological Commentary  
on 2 Kings 23." In *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the  
Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Phillip J. King*, ed. Michael  
D. Coogan, et al., 143-68. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox.

Emerton, John A.

1999 "'Yahweh and His Asherah': The Goddess or Her Symbol."  
*Vetus Testamentum* 49: 315-37.

Eynikel, Erik

1996 *The Reform of King Josiah and the Composition of the  
Deuteronomistic History*. Leiden: Brill.

Handy, Lowell K.

1995 "Historical Probability and the Narrative of Josiah's Reform  
in 2 Kings." In *The Pitcher is Broken: Memorial Essays for  
Gösta Ahlström*, ed. Steven W. Holloway and Lowell K.  
Handy. JSOT Supplemental Series 190. Sheffield: JSOT  
Press.

Holladay, John S., Jr.

1987 "Religion in Israel and Judah Under the Monarchy: An  
Explicitly Archaeological Approach." In *Ancient Israelite  
Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. Patrick D.  
Miller, Jr., Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride, 249-99.  
Philadelphia: Fortress.

Keel, Othmar and Christoph Uehlinger

1998 *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God in Ancient Israel*. Minne-  
apolis: Fortress.

Knauf, Ernst A.

1991 "From History to Interpretation." In *The Fabric of History:  
Text, Artifact and Israel's Past*, ed. Diana Edelman, 26-64.



JSOT Supplemental Series 127, Sheffield: JSOT Press.

Lohfink, Norbert

1987

"The Cult Reform of Josiah of Judah: 2 Kings 22-23 as a Source for the History of Israelite Religion." In *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. Patrick D. Miller, Jr., Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride, 459-75. Philadelphia: Fortress.

Meshel, Ze'ev

1979

"Did Yahweh Have a Consort? The New Religious Inscriptions from the Sinai." *Biblical Archaeology Review* 5/2 (March/April): 24-35.

Miller, Patrick D.

1981

"Psalms and Inscriptions." In *Congress Volume, Vienna, 1980*, ed. John A. Emerton, 311-32. Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum* 32. Leiden: Brill.

Naveh, Joseph

1963

"Old Hebrew Inscriptions in a Burial Cave." *Israel Exploration Journal* 13: 74-92.

Niehr, Herbert

1995

"Die Reform des Joschija: Methodische, historische und religionsgeschichtliche Aspekte." In *Jeremia und die deuteronomistische Bewegung*, ed. Walter Gross, 33-55. Athenäum: Beltz.

Reuter, Eleonore

1993

*Kultzentralization: Entstehung und Theologie von Dtn 12*. Bonner Biblische Beiträge 87. Frankfurt am Main: Anton Hain.

Sass, Benjamin

1993

"The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals: Iconism vs. Aniconism," In *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals: Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Fribourg on April*

17-20, 1991, ed. Benjamin Sass and Christoph Uehlinger, 194-256. Fribourg: University Press.

Shiloh, Yigal

1986

"A Group of Hebrew Bullae from the City of David." *Israel Exploration Journal* 36: 16-38.

Tigay, Jeffrey H.

1986

*You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions*. Atlanta: Scholars Press.

1987

"Israelite Religion: The Onomastic and Epigraphic Evidence." In *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. Patrick D. Miller, Jr., Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride, 157-94. Philadelphia: Fortress.

Uehlinger, Christoph

1993

"Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals, Iconography and Syro-Palestinian Religions of Iron Age II: Some Afterthoughts and Conclusions." In *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals: Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Fribourg on April 17-20, 1991*, ed. Benjamin Sass and Christoph Uehlinger, 257-88. Fribourg: University Press.

1995

"Gab es eine joschijanische Kultreform? Plädoyer für ein begründetes Minimum." In *Jeremia und die deuteronomistische Bewegung*, ed. Walter Gross, 57-89. Athenäum: Beltz.

Ussiskin, David

1988

"The Date of the Judean Shrine at Arad." *Israel Exploration Journal* 38: 142-157.

Spieckermann, Hermann

1982

*Juda unter Assur in der Sargonidenzeit*. Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 129, Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.



Vaughn, Andrew A.

1999      *Theology, History, and Archaeology in the Chronicler's Account of Hezekiah.* Archaeology and Biblical Studies 4. Atlanta: Scholars Press.

Yadin, Yigael

1976      "Beer-Sheba: The High Place Destroyed by King Josiah."  
*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 222:5-17.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HUMAN AGENCY IN BARTH'S DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION

BO KAREN LEE

### INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH KARL BARTH'S THEOLOGY HAS BEEN INTERPRETED BY A BROAD spectrum of schools in a remarkably diverse number of ways, one aspect of his thought remains incontestably clear: God is Lord and God alone will remain Lord. Throughout the pages of the *Church Dogmatics*, we find Barth arguing insistently and consistently that "God reveals Himself as the *Lord*" (CD I/1:308). In this act of self-revelation, God *alone* is the initiator of divine revelation granted *to* humanity; and as God's revelation is dynamic and vibrant, God is the sole initiator (and creator) of divine relationship *with* humanity. God invites humanity into fellowship with Godself, and this invitation is unilateral in direction, for God again is "Lord," Lord of creation, reconciliation, and redemption.

The absolute primacy and supremacy of God—a God who stands radically distinct and infinitely, qualitatively different from all creation, according to Barth—demands that no anthropocentric definition be imposed upon God nor that any human endeavor or striving be "added" to the perfect work of God. This comes into crisp focus when we examine Barth's doctrine of justification and sanctification, particularly as found in CD IV/2 ¶66. Intent on ensuring that any human usurpation of God's Lordship be completely eradicated from a properly theocentric Christian framework, Barth argues that humans can contribute *nothing* to the completed and perfect work of Christ in reconciling humanity to God. Humans bring to God no "capability"



for their own justification and sanctification, for they are already justified and sanctified, utterly and perfectly, in Christ.

What then remains for humans to do? If they cannot “add” anything to this perfect work, how can they legitimately “act?” In the simple “reception” of all that has been done for them, are there no means with which to qualify the “how” of reception? Barth continually bridges the perfect work of God accomplished in Christ with the anthropological sphere via his emphasis on the Holy Spirit, but might there still be an imbalance here which leaves little room for authentic human response, as some have found in Barth’s theology? (This imbalance would be graver, for example, than the legitimate “asymmetry” of which George Hunsinger (1991:221-4) writes.) In other words, if the *Holy Spirit* alone is the definitive answer to the gap between the complete and perfect objective work of Christ and the subjective appropriation of that work, how then is the human agent involved?<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the course of this paper, we will focus specifically on Barth’s doctrine of *sanctification*, and the role he assigns to the human agent in the subjective appropriation of that which is objectively complete in Christ. *How* does the *de iure* reality of sanctification become a *de facto* part of the Christian’s existence, such that she lives according to this new reality of which she has been vitally included? We will argue that Barth provides insufficient detail about the human agent’s role in responsibly appropriating the sanctification that is already hers; the weight constantly shifts over to the perfect and complete work accomplished in Christ, which need simply be appropriated through the action of the Holy Spirit. What then is a viable and valid human response, if it is entirely the Holy Spirit’s work? Does sanctification become automatically applied to each

<sup>1</sup>Even Barth’s assertion that the Holy Spirit is that which “bonds” the individual to Christ becomes unhelpful (and simply theoretical) in this regard, as we shall see. There is still the danger that Barth creates little room for a valid and hefty anthropology, as Nigel Biggar (1993:5), for example, has argued. Other interpreters of Barth, like George Hunsinger (1991:221-4), John Webster (1995:4), Daniel L. Migliore (1998:114-5, 119), Thomas A. Smail (1986:89-91, 101), Alice Collins (1988:219-223), and Jean-Luc Blondel (1980:110-14) have found a valid space for human agency in Barth’s thought, in general, as Barth himself was careful to state that God’s perfect work never negates the genuine responsibility and response of the human subject (cf. Barth 1969:42, and Barth, 1981:27, 267). *How then, does Barth stay faithful to his own claim, in this specific doctrine of sanctification, when he categorically bridges the divine and human spheres with the Holy Spirit, a bridge which seems to be described in theory only, with little, if no, concrete explanation?*

Christian, independent of his or her own action?<sup>2</sup>

In other sections of IV/2, we will see that Barth does give some hints as to the “means” of sanctification in the life of the individual Christian. God makes use of the “cross,” for example, to effect sanctification in each believer; Barth calls the cross that “indispensable” and final element of sanctification, indeed its “fulfillment,” and to this claim we will direct some attention. Furthermore, Barth explains that a life of obedience and discipleship, essential to the out-working of sanctification (CD IV/2:537), is possible only as it is impelled by *love*. We will thus need to describe Barth’s understanding of love as the *power behind* sanctification. At the end of Barth’s discussion of sanctification, however, we contest that the reader is still left unsatisfied as to understanding the role of the human agent in his or her own sanctification. The cross is indeed God’s design for sanctification, but is not to be sought by the individual (and understandably so), and love is merely the gift of the Holy Spirit, with little if no detail given as to how the Christian herself may “grow” in this love. Thus, the human agent seems simply to be at the mercies of the Holy Spirit, from beginning to end, able to “contribute” *nothing* to the “movement” of sanctification.

Although Barth gives insufficient attention to the role of the human agent in his doctrine of sanctification, specifically found in IV/2, we will be wise to look for other hints throughout other sections of Barth’s *Church Dogmatics*, though they not be explicitly dedicated to the doctrine of sanctification. Our search will necessarily take us to later sections of Barth’s work (e.g., IV/4), where we are able to find some critical detail on the “how” of the human agent’s responsible appropriation of sanctification. Towards the close of our discussion, we will thus pay special heed to Barth’s emphasis on *prayer*, a key that he provides to the reception of the Holy Spirit, which then becomes a crucial link between human agency and divine agency. God does, in the end, give plenty of room for the human agent to act responsibly and actively, according to Barth, but it is definitively placed under the rubric of God’s perfect work, as the Christian’s corresponding work of unceasing and aggressive invocation. Through prayer, Christians are called to cry out for more of the Holy Spirit,

<sup>2</sup>Barth offers manifold layers of imagery that imply that the work of God’s grace in sanctification is indeed “irresistible” and thus ensured. It is in fact, an “invasion” of God into the anthropological realm (CD IV/2 1956:523). But is sanctification truly irresistible? At other times and places, Barth writes and cautions that the human can indeed thwart, and possibly even threaten, this work of God (CD IV/2 1956:322).



and because God responds, it is through this prayer that they thus attain the power to live in light of the sanctification that is already theirs in Christ.

### SANCTIFICATION AS THE WORK OF GOD

In ¶66 of Barth's *Church Dogmatics* (IV/2), entitled "The Sanctification of Man," Barth describes justification and sanctification as two movements of a single event. This one event can be described as the one work of the incarnate Deity, who in his life-history and in his existence as Son of God and Son of Man, represented both the movement of God towards humanity (i.e., "man's justification"), and humanity's respective movement toward God (i.e., "man's sanctification"). These two movements are to be regarded as "more closely united than in a mathematical point," for the God who in Christ's humiliation "justifies us" is also the "man who in His exaltation sanctifies us" (CD IV/2:503). Because Christ was faithful and obedient as the Son of Man, he can stand on behalf of the sanctified Christian, i.e., the one who is converted towards God, in faith and obedience (CD IV/2:537). Barth warns against a separation of justification and sanctification, arguing against a "dualism" or a "psychologizing" that distinguishes chronologically successive stages in the Christian life (CD IV/2:503). His reasoning is that both justification and sanctification have been objectively, definitively accomplished in Christ, the Representative of humanity, and that the person who stands in Christ thus stands with him in justification and sanctification: i.e., they "participate in Christ" (CD IV/2:510).

While these two events cannot be understood apart from each other, Barth writes that "it is one thing that God turns in free grace to sinful man, and quite another that in the same free grace He converts man to Himself" (CD IV/2:503). He thus acknowledges the distinctive character of this upward movement, i.e., that God "claims this man and makes him willing and ready for His service," or that the Christian is enabled to live in "obedience, or love, as his correspondence to the holiness imparted to him in Jesus Christ" (CD:503). Barth then turns his primary attention to the Christian's sanctification (i.e., the movement of humanity towards God), which occupies his thought for the remainder of ¶66, and to this we shall now turn.

Sanctification, according to Barth, is made possible only by virtue of the Christian's *participatio Christi*. Everything depends and hinges upon humanity's standing with Christ. But how and in what manner? Barth continually stresses that this "participation" is rendered effective in the life of the indi-

vidual Christian only through the power of the *Holy Spirit*. How then does the Holy Spirit work to effect this sanctification, concretely and subjectively, in the here and now? How can the individual respond to Christ's call to discipleship, and "correspond to" the holiness of "the Holy One" whom they are called to follow? How are they, in fact, "awakened to conversion," such that they fully participate in that which Christ has accomplished for them?

In ¶66.4 (as well as ¶66.2, in part), Barth vividly describes this "awakening" event, presenting it as that unique and "irresistible" work of God, via the Holy Spirit, which effects the individual's conversion. "Conversion," though an event, is regarded by Barth to be the "whole life-movement" (CD IV/2:566) of the Christian towards God (which has earlier been termed "sanctification"); it is a continual re-awakening which can be caused only by God. As God moves and "shakes" God's people, they are invited, indeed "compelled," to enter into legitimate covenant with God. In this movement of God, not only has God declared, "I will be your God," it is God who now also makes possible the response, "and you will be my people" (CD IV/2:562). It is thus God alone who effects a "disturbance"—an "irresistible" and "invincible" one, in fact (CD IV/2:527)—thereby causing the individual to move towards God. In this movement of God, a real and genuine "change" occurs within the Christian, such that radical alteration and re-determination have come over him or her, through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is again called the "source" from which power for sanctification is granted, and his work is a "direct" and "unimpeded flow" (CD IV/2:554).

Not only must an "alien factor" that is "irresistible," "unimpeded," and "invincible" in force, awaken the individual to conversion, Barth even goes so far as to use the language of "invasion" and "attack" (CD IV/2:523, 543) when describing the work of God through the Holy Spirit. For humans stand in need of vigorous awakening, not only from a deep slumber of misery and sloth, but also from a death-like unresponsiveness to God. This awakening thus requires a "jolt" that "arrests," and, as such, Barth is unhesitant to revert to even violent images when referring to the gracious work of God. The Kingdom of God not only "confronts, contradicts, and opposes" humanity, grace comes upon Christians in the form of a "great *onslaught*" (CD IV/2:543). It is God's "*coup d'état*," His revolution, that "*breaks*" (544), "*cuts across*" (530), and "*radically assails*" (531) them. Even while the language is strong and portrays the need for God to violently shake, disrupt, and disturb the otherwise "undisturbed sinner" (in such a way that the individual cannot help but respond to such "compulsion" (CD IV/2:578)), we cannot neglect the fact that Barth nonetheless rejects the notion of a



“violent” God who destroys the human dignity and even agency of the individual. God’s work may have violent force, but the force is never “relentless”; it is rather gentle while forceful and effective (seemingly contradictory images which Barth sees no need to reconcile), an overpouring of God’s great “mercy” that invites and summons the individual to respond.

In this gracious invitation of God, the individual is thereby called to take ownership of her appropriation of grace, (not of grace *per se*, which is always *dandum*, never *datum*), and to live according to the “capacity” and “total freedom” that have been opened up for her, such that she need not “continually commit new sins” (CD IV/2:531). She is beckoned to turn from her old ways and to radically turn to the new woman that she already is, for God has placed a “new heart” and a “new spirit” within her (CD IV/2:561). As the Christian has been “awakened,” furthermore, she must now actively “waken” and “arise” with all of her being (CD IV/2:556). This act of awakening is thus both “wholly creaturely and wholly divine” (but with its “initial shock” coming from God) (CD IV/2:557). Because she has been “liberated,” she “can” and “must” live in this liberation towards God by “availing” herself of her freedom (CD IV/2:578).

The Christian is thus called to become a legitimate and valued “covenant-partner with God,” one who is “loyal,” and “well-pleasing to and blessed by Him” (CD IV/2:514). She has been declared a “co-worker” with God, one whose works can attest God’s own works (CD IV/2:593). Barth qualifies that it is in no sense a partnership of equals, of a “co-ordination between two comparable elements, but only of the absolute primacy of the divine over the creaturely” (CD IV/2:557). Nonetheless, it is a valid partnership, a covenant between God and humanity. In what way then is this partnership played out?

As Christians are called to this new life, they are commanded to “look to Christ,” and in so doing, “lift up themselves,” (CD IV/2:527, 553-4) as their response to the “irresistible” force of grace that rests upon and works within them. They are called to true and genuine human action. This action even entails rigorous “warfare” with and within oneself, a “quarrel” and “falling-out” with oneself. The Christian must be actively engaged in renouncing “what he previously was and did, leaving his old way, abandoning himself as he was, *boldly enterprising* a completely new and different being and action, entering a new way” (CD:570). He himself must become that “new man” who he has already been declared to be, by constantly looking towards Christ, in whom his sanctification has been fulfilled. Nevertheless, Barth emphatically reiterates that this “looking” towards Christ and “lifting” up of self are utterly impossible without the work of that “alien factor” akin to a “powerful wind which comes sweeping

across” the condition of the individual (CD IV/2:528). It is only as God moves, i.e., as Christians are awakened and empowered by the Spirit, that this free gift of covenant-partnership can be received and responded to, with calm, resolute, and vigorous action (CD IV/2:594).

Since all has been provided for the Christian’s sanctification by God, Barth continues his thought in the following sub-section, “The Praise of Works” (§66.5), by asserting that the Christian is thus without “excuse,” if she performs not “good works” but rather *continues in her “sloth and corruption and disintegration”* (CD IV/2:597). Here we must pause to ask a crucial question. If God is the guarantor of the Christian’s sanctification, what then can explain the frailty and failure of Christian existence? Barth certainly concedes that there is regress and disappointment in the Christian life, but if God has granted all that is needed for sanctification, and irresistibly so, what has gone awry? Can the answer perhaps be found within the reality of the pneumatological bridge, i.e., that which brings the power of God into the anthropological sphere? Why has the bridge not been effectively crossed? Is there perhaps a missing link somewhere? Barth does not here concern himself with this all-important question.

In §64.4, “The Direction of the Son,” Barth does note briefly that the Christian indeed has the ability to “grieve,” “quench,” and “do despite to” the Holy Spirit (CD IV/2:322). Is this then the possible “excuse,” the “reason” by which Christians are to understand their inability to appropriate all that is already theirs in Christ?<sup>3</sup> And is it then the human’s responsibility to somehow make “use” of and cross the pneumatological bridge—or is this bridge only unilateral in direction, from God to the Christian, as Barth is prone to insist? Barth offers no clear answers at this critical juncture, but seems content simply to claim that sanctification has been completed in Christ and will be offered, automatically and irresistibly so, to the Christian through the impelling power of the Holy Spirit. There appears to be a missing link, however, given the real possibility and actuality of Christian failure. Wherein does it lie? One might even be tempted to ask: If God is solely responsible for the Christian’s sanctification, is God then responsible for the Christian’s regress and failure in sanctification? If God alone

<sup>3</sup>Certainly, we must remember that the Christian will always be *simul (totus) iustus, simul (totus) peccator* (CD IV/2 1956:572). The *simul*, however, does not require that there is no movement from the old to the new. In fact, the movement is required, and a “death and definite end and destruction” of the old sought, while the new is to be “exclusively, inviolably” developed. In this “quarrel” of conversion, the Christian “can no longer be the one he was and can be only the one he will be” (CD IV/2 1956:574).



provides the power for conversion, has *God* chosen not to provide it at a certain point in time, or has there been a crucial error within the Christian's own existence, a rift between the Spirit of God and the anthropological sphere? What then accounts for it? We are left with no viable answers, thus far.

### THE CROSS OF THE CHRISTIAN

In the final sub-section of Barth's treatment of "Man's Sanctification," ¶66.6, "The Dignity of the Cross," Barth does provide one significant clue as to the means by which a Christian is sanctified in the here and now. As the Christian is called to follow Christ, she will also be called to endure the hardships and sufferings that are laid upon every Christian (CD IV/2:599-600). And it is with reference to these "crosses" that she can make decisive "movement" in conversion, and rise up from the "sloth" and "misery" that otherwise characterize her existence. Through the cross of the Christian, that "integral" and "indispensable element" of sanctification, we thus find the "fulfillment" of sanctification (CD IV/2:601,606).<sup>4</sup>

In what way does the experience of the cross "fulfill" the Christian's sanctification? How does the Christian, with Christ, "learn obedience" by the things which she must necessarily "suffer," thereby being "conformed to the likeness of Christ?" Rather than simply stating and assuming that the cross is the "crown" of the doctrine of sanctification, Barth details four ways in which the cross effects the Christian's sanctification. He describes the manner in which the cross is the "awakening call" of the Christian, the "summons to look to" Jesus, and to "arise" afresh (CD IV/2:607).

First, the cross is that which *humbles* the Christian, preventing her from growing in overweening pride, and causing her to remember that God alone is Lord, even Lord of her Christian "successes." The cross thus sets a "limit" to her existence and reminds her of her frailty before and dependence upon God,

<sup>4</sup>We must here note that these "crosses" are in no way analogous to the unique suffering of Christ, as they have no redemptive value for self or others; nonetheless, they must share some "correspondence," if the Christian is to enter into this "special fellowship with Christ" (CD IV/2 1956:599-600). What then does this "suffering" look like? Barth describes three kinds: persecution and rejection in the world; the transience and suffering of everyday life; and the temptations, doubts, and despair of the Christian, including the feeling of abandonment by God (CD IV/2 1956:610-613).

thereby directing her back to the movement towards God, i.e., sanctification. Second, the cross may also be the “rod of fatherly love,” the “answer to [the Christian’s] own corruption”—and this “corruption” is “directly or indirectly brought before him in the suffering which overtakes him.” Reminding the Christian of the true cross of Christ, which occurred on behalf of such corruption, the cross “may and will renew [the Christian’s] gratitude, and give to his movement of conversion the fresh impulse and seriousness which are always so badly needed” (CD IV/2:608). Third, it is through the cross that the Christian is strengthened in “faith, obedience, and love,” for it is a “powerful force to discipline” her towards a new sensitivity to God. The Christian is thus awakened from even unrecognizable stupor or wandering, through the “crises” that inevitably come, and these crosses cause “man’s own spirit [to be] rightly directed by the Holy Spirit as it previously refused to be” (CD IV/2:608).

Finally, the cross is that opportunity whereby the Christian’s existence and work are “purified” and “deepened”; for the cross causes the Christian to be “thrown back with all the greater intensity on God” and to be “referred to the strength which comes from the covenant with Him.” The Christian thus runs toward God, and as she takes up her cross, she “sets her hand to the work with renewed willingness and energy” (CD IV/2:609). Although Barth has surveyed for us the necessity of the Christian’s cross, and the ways in which the cross is “serviceable” to sanctification, i.e., that “final” and “indispensable” element of sanctification, we have still not found a satisfactory answer as to why there may be and often are significant roadblocks in the Christian’s appropriation of her rightful sanctification.<sup>5</sup> Does the answer possibly lie in the Christian’s response to the crosses that are laid upon her? Barth does write that the Christian ought to constantly pray that the Holy Spirit “make [him/her] free to accept and therefore to bear the appointed cross, i.e., to make it [his/her] own” (CD IV/2:613). Might a scorn and resentment of hardships, then (rather than a proper “yielding” (CD IV/2:604) to them), hinder the work of sanctification, not allowing for the humility and purification that are to be effected by the cross? And might the Christian’s proper *or* improper attitude toward her crosses then determine, at least to some extent, whether sanctification is appropriated *or* possibly even thwarted? Barth reminds us on more than a few occasions that it is *God* who

<sup>5</sup>Barth is careful to remind us that the Christian is never to “seek” out her own crosses, but that they are instead a guaranteed part of her existence, to which she must appropriately respond when she is confronted by them. The cross, then, can be viewed as a “gift” from God, as God’s gracious form of discipline and purification.



replaces the Christian's "heart of stone" with a "heart of flesh" (Ezek 36:26) (CD IV/2:780); does it then follow that it is up to God alone to determine how the Christian will respond to her crosses? Indeed, Barth has more than implied that the Holy Spirit alone can enable the right "yielding" before God and hence before his or her cross.

It appears that Barth would categorically hesitate to place the cause of "failure" within the Christian's own realm. If God is Lord, as Barth consistently declares, God must be Lord even over human failures, even in the lives of those who are already justified and sanctified "in Christ." God's power cannot and must not be hindered by the hardness of sin and the resistance that the individual gives to God. Yet, in other places, Barth allows for this frightening possibility, as he also recognizes that the Christian can indeed "grieve," "quench," and "blaspheme against" the Spirit of God (CD IV/2:322). Barth thus seems to allow for the all-too-real possibility that the Christian may not yield to the work of the Holy Spirit, resisting that work and thereby failing to appropriate it. How does Barth then account for this "failure," if the Holy Spirit's effectiveness is said in other places of the CD to be guaranteed and "irresistible?"

## LOVE — THE POWER BEHIND SANCTIFICATION

While Barth provides little clue in IV/2, thus far, as to how the Christian can be a responsible agent in the appropriation of his or her sanctification, Barth does go on, at the end of the volume, to discuss the *power* behind the Christian's sanctification—namely, "Christian love." Only inasmuch as the Christian loves God "properly," i.e., with a love that "corresponds" to God's own love, can he or she obey God, walk in faithful discipleship, and live out his or her sanctification: "Without love for God there is no obedience to God...Without love for Jesus there is no discipleship. *Obedience...and discipleship arise automatically from the centre [i.e., love]*" (CD IV/2:796). What then is Christian love? And can Barth's detailed characterization of this love provide any clue as to the "means," or to the human role, involved in sanctification? Let us first turn to Barth's description of love, after which we may address the latter question of the human's role in the act of love.

Christian love, according to Barth, is unique among all other definitions of "love" in that it is a self-giving, self-surrendering love. In loving, the agent gives of herself fully, and "pours" out *herself*, to the other (CD IV/2:730, 797). This radical surrender and giving, however, can occur only in correspondence to the

great reception of love, i.e., to God's own self-giving of love to the human individual. Barth thus focuses on the love of God, and describes it as an electing, purifying, and creative love (CD IV/2:766-778). As *creative* love, it "causes those who are loved by [God] *to love*" (CD IV/2:776). Through the power of God's love, a "new man" has been made, and having become a "child of God," this individual is "free to model his action on what God does, shaping it in correspondence with the action of the Father" (CD IV/2:778). What is the guarantee, then, that the Christian will take up his or her freedom, i.e., "avail himself of it?" (CD IV/2:554) Barth has indeed given some contours to what Christian love *is*, but does he also offer explanation as to *how* the Christian may grow in this love? If the Christian's love for God is the precondition for his or her obedience to God in responsible sanctification, as we have seen above, how then does he or she come to love God and deepen in that love? What clues are provided?

First, Barth asserts in ¶68.2, "The Basis of Love," that the human agent is fully dependent upon God for the reception and deepening of Christian love; as we have seen, it is God's "creative" love that causes the Christian herself to love. Nonetheless, the human action's "dependence on [God's] action does not violate its character as a *spontaneous and responsible human action*; its character as decision... There is no rivalry between the divine freedom and the human. Thus the dependence of man's action on God does not involve any weakening, alteration or finally destruction of its freedom and its character as decision" (CD IV/2:753). The Christian is still called to act in robust partnership with God, to respond to God with her "own heart and soul and strength, as an independent subject who encounters and replies to God and is responsible to Him as His partner" (CD IV/2:786).

Barth will be sure to qualify again, however, that it is only by the "impelling" and "quickenning power of the Holy Spirit that small and sinful man may love the great and holy God, responding to the divine self-offering with his own" (CD IV/2:787,791). It can only be through the Holy Spirit then, that the Christian chooses to yield to God, to give all of self to God, allowing even for the possibility that the Christian "loves God—in that he makes use of the freedom to give himself to Him. He has himself, and everything else, *only as God has him*" (CD IV/2:794). Thus, this response of love by the human agent "can and must be described both as the work of God's love and also as the work of the Holy Spirit." Only God's creative love, through the Holy Spirit, can cause the Christian to love in return, placing within her "another heart" and a "new spirit," "taking away the stony heart out of their flesh and giving them a heart of flesh" (CD IV/2:779-80).



Certainly, this love must be “continually renewed...in which man is constantly referred to God’s own presence and encounter with him, to the eternal love which is the basis of his love, to the work and gift of the Holy Spirit” (CD IV/2:802). How then is this love “renewed?” The answer, again, is found in the action of the Holy Spirit. It is God’s action. Barth simply writes that the “one who is most deeply filled with the Spirit is the one who is richest in love, and the one who is devoid of love necessarily betrays the fact that he is empty of the Spirit” (CD IV/2:818). But what distinguishes between the fullness and the emptiness, if it is God’s work alone to supply the Spirit?

Since Christian love can be received and attained only through the work of the Holy Spirit, what then can the human agent really do, in response to this reality? What determines whether or not the Christian is “filled with the Spirit” or “empty of the Spirit?” (CD IV/2:818) What ensures that the Holy Spirit will be “mightily at work” within any individual? (CD IV/2:826) Certainly, she must respond actively to the work of God upon her, but what can she do when all she does is see the “littleness and frailty” of her love, which are her “*own responsibility and not that of the Holy Spirit?*” (CD IV/2:785) If it is indeed her responsibility, what then can she do? How can she act, as responsible agent? Does she simply wait and hope that the Holy Spirit will do the work, or can she act aggressively, even in the waiting? Barth (CD IV/2:785) notes in very brief passing that the New Testament shows that the “term ‘love’ is tacitly enwrapped in thankful adoration, in sheer joy at the presence of the *unexpected*, of what *we can only pray for.*” He simply ends here, however, and makes no more mention of prayer in this section. (This discussion’s full development had to wait several years.)

### VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS

Thus far in CD IV/2, not only has Barth failed to answer the question of *how* it is that the human agent has concrete responsibility for his or her own sanctification, i.e., his or her appropriation of the perfect and complete work accomplished in Christ, he has also failed to address the question of *how* the individual specifically (and responsibly) interacts with the Holy Spirit, that which effects and empowers sanctification. He simply posits the Holy Spirit, as the continual answer to the human predicament—the Holy Spirit as “bridge” which connects the divine and anthropological spheres. We may quite easily see how this bridge is connected to the divine on one side—as Barth argues emphatically for the

full divinity of the Holy Spirit (CD IV/2:335)—but how can the human agent responsibly find connection with the other side of the pneumatological bridge?<sup>6</sup> The human, in Barth's account, seems to be left dangling on her own, only hoping that the work of the Holy Spirit will somehow reach her. Is this reach guaranteed, however? In what way does the individual hope and wait?

As we explore the later portions of the CD, we will find to our relief that Barth does *not* leave us continually 'dangling' with little concrete explication of that vital link between the human agent and the Holy Spirit. In his fragment on baptism, "The Foundation of the Christian Life" (IV/4), Barth gives some important clues as to how the human agent may be actively involved in the reception of the Holy Spirit and his power, and subsequent sections of "The Christian Life" (CD IV/4, ¶76-78) continue Barth's line of connection.

In these revealing portions of his later thought, we find Barth lifting up *prayer* as the one responsible work which the Christian can perform, her most important "action" in the Christian life (cf. Migliore 1998:115). It is prayer by which the Christian can live as faithful agent, responding to God's "permission," "call," and "command" to pray (Barth 1981:43), and it is through prayer that the Christian thus enters into true "covenant-partnership" with God. Through the cry of the Christian, "*Veni creator Spiritus*," the Christian in reality becomes attuned to the reality of the Spirit and is made ready for a deeper reception of all that has already been made available to her. And as the Christian prays, the Holy Spirit is promised to come in fresh ways, for God has chosen to hear and respond. Prayer thus forms the remarkable encounter of divine and human agency,<sup>7</sup> as the human agent finds vital connection with the pneumatological bridge, i.e., the Holy Spirit who brings the power and reality of the divine sphere into the anthropological.

<sup>6</sup>T. F. Torrance (1956:209) also critiqued Barth's thought for its insufficient working out of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, "and along with that a clarification and deepening of the doctrine of a living union with Jesus Christ." (Perhaps it was Torrance's own dynamic relationship with Barth (cf. T. F. Torrance in McKim 1986) that encouraged Barth to develop this aspect in CD IV/4.)

<sup>7</sup>Barth writes in CD IV/4 (1981:90) that "the Holy Spirit God has dealings with these people in such a way that he cannot continue to act one-sidedly." What are these "dealings" then? Barth explains further that it God's "free grace alone—the grace they always need—that he will so conduct those dealings, that intercourse and exchange with them, in such a way that he makes them his partners and himself their partner, that he *forges so close a link between their invocation and his answering, their action and his*. He willed this and did it when he brought them to know



As we look to Barth's work on baptism as the "foundation of the Christian life," we find Barth's assertion that there does exist such a thing as "genuine human faithfulness in relation to God's own faithfulness." The Christian's turning in faithfulness to God, however, is always the work of this faithful God, an impartation of freedom and liberation (*for* faithfulness) granted to the individual by God. Through this gift of freedom, the Christian is enabled to participate actively, not just passively, in God's grace, and is thus called to correspond to God's work with her own work. She is, in essence, liberated to choose freely that which God has already chosen for her (CD IV/4:2-6). What then is the source and power behind this liberation? Barth calls it the "baptism of the Holy Spirit," the outpouring of God's Spirit into the life of the individual such that she is beckoned and empowered to turn towards God.

How does the outpouring of the Holy Spirit flow in a continuous way, however, so as to effect the Christian's ongoing appropriation of her sanctification? Is it entirely one-sided, such that the Christian is simply to wait? Is it only up to God to grant or withhold the gift of the Holy Spirit? Barth passionately rejects a waiting that is "indolent" and "idle," and speaks instead of a "hastening that waits." How then does the Christian "hasten" the coming of God's kingdom, not only into the world, but also into her own life and existence? How does she "hasten" the outpour of the Holy Spirit into her life?

Barth writes in this fragment that as the Christian has already been baptized with the Holy Spirit, she is called to "petition" for the continual outpour of the Holy Spirit, again and again. This prayer takes the form of not "*Venit Creator Spiritus*," but "*Veni Creator Spiritus*," and is the "cry of need uttered by the very ones who know and have the Spirit of Christ in this beginning of His work" here (CD IV/4:77). As the gracious outpour of the Holy Spirit is a dynamic relation between God and humanity, *dandum* and not *datum*,<sup>8</sup> the Christian must pray for the release and reception of the Holy Spirit, time and time again (CD IV/4:78).<sup>9</sup> The outpour of the Spirit, as Christ's own movement toward us, is a continuation of the *parousia* of Christ at Pentecost (CD IV/4:89), and it is a move-

---

himself as Father and called them his children. In so doing he blocked the way back to the fiction that they were dealing with a self-enclosed deity that worked alone" (CD IV/4 1981:115-116).

<sup>8</sup>Again, we can raise the question here of the indwelling Spirit in the life of each believer, not as a "possession," but certainly as a guarantee and promise, thus perhaps a *datum* while still *dandum*. Barth, however, still prefers to regard the "filling" by the Holy Spirit as an "eschatological statement," a promise that looks only to the "absolute future" (CD I/1:464).

ment “which we may *expect* and *hope for* with *certainty and joy*, but for which we have always *to pray*” (CD IV/4:88; italics mine).

While the Christian prays, Barth again explains that he or she must continue in “clear decisions” along the path of the Christian life, a decision that is two-fold in nature: a “resolute renunciation” of the old “being of crude or subtle self-justification”; and a “pledge” towards that new life of service to God and neighbor. This confession and “daily repentance” (CD IV/4:202-3) must be continually renewed, *while* the Christian prays and waits, but the path is problematic and the “venture” rocky, *and so* the Christian must pray and wait. Barth thus acknowledges human failure, but he also provides a *human* solution to that failure. “Constantly...the Christian will take the liberty of disregarding the right which God has against and for and to him, acknowledging instead the right of another god, and ultimately his own right. Constantly the baptized will be shockingly unfaithful... to the Lord” (CD IV/4:204). What then is the hope for human faithfulness? The promise lies in the fact that Jesus waits for his own, moving towards them; but this hope and promise cannot be an “idle, passive and inactive” expectation, it *must* be “active in prayer.” It is “only in this specific act of their prayer” that the “community and the world” move towards Christ, truly encountering the One who waits for and moves toward them (CD IV/4:207-9). Prayer is thus the point at which humanity and Christ concretely and vitally meet each other, the way in which God “forges so close a link between their invocation and his answering, their action and his” (CD IV/4:115-6), for the “receiving of His grace in its full reality is *only* there, but *really* there, where it is *desired* of Him, *sought* of Him, *asked* of Him” (CD IV/4:209; italics mine).

Prayer, according to Barth, is therefore the most rigorous act in which the Christian can engage towards her sanctification; it is a “factual acknowledgment of [God’s] gift [i.e., prayer] as the gift of His free grace, as the factual certainty of His presence and action, as prayer which in fact already carries its answer within

<sup>9</sup>Barth notes here a textual variant of the Lord’s Prayer found in Luke’s account. In Codex D, the “prayer for the coming of the kingdom of God is here replaced by a prayer for the descent of the Spirit” (Luke 11:2), and while this is indeed a “remarkable variant” (see, however, CD IV/4 1981:241, where Barth qualifies himself), it may perhaps be more remarkable that in the most definitive text of Luke 11 (and not that of a variant), the portion on the Lord’s Prayer and on prayer, in general (Luke 11:1-13) ends with the promise, “*how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to whose who ask Him?*” This insight from Scripture also provides the impetus to pray for the Holy Spirit, as Barth has been arguing thus far in his fragment (though Barth surprisingly makes no mention of this remarkable verse).



it" (CD IV/4:209). Prayer thus safeguards the fact that God alone is Lord and that God alone effects sanctification, while also acknowledging the fact that God has graciously imparted the freedom to pray to the human agent, thus allowing for human agency and involvement in God's work. As the Christian's most legitimate human action in the whole divine and human enterprise of sanctification, prayer is thus the way in which humans are called to "cooperate" as "God's covenant-partner" (cf. Migliore 1998:113-4). Prayer is the Christian's "unequivocal obedience to God, an unequivocal *answer* to His justifying and sanctifying work and word." It is "pure seeking, knocking, asking: Come, Lord Jesus! *Veni Creator Spiritus*" (CD IV/4:210)! Christians are thus to wait for God, as God "waits for them there," and the central point of encounter that takes place in the mutual waiting is located in the act of prayer. Prayer is thus a "hastening that waits"; it waits, but it nonetheless "hastens" towards the release of God's Spirit into the world and into the Christian community, as well as into the life of the Christian individual.

As Christians thus pray for a continual and greater release of the Holy Spirit into their lives, as well as for a "good conscience, a being in harmony with God," (i.e., a subjective certainty of the sanctification which is objectively certain in Christ), they must remember (and in the very act of prayer are reminded) that this harmony is something "they do not have...naturally, nor can they procure it for themselves, nor can they be assured of it of themselves. They can only await it as God's free gift. Hence they can only pray for it" (CD IV/4:210-11). Barth's final answer to the question of human responsibility for the subjective appropriation of sanctification is thus simply this petition, "Come Lord Jesus. *Veni Creator Spiritus*." <sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup>A final question is at hand: One may argue that as God has invited humanity into covenant-partnership with Godself, and as God has commanded humanity to freely and actively pray in this partnership, God is taking a "risk" in allowing for such concrete human agency: "it is very proper for [God]...to let his action be co-determined by his children who have been freed for obedience to him" (CD IV/4 1981:104). Certainly, God does not "need" the prayers of individuals, but as God has consigned prayer to the active role of humans, God chooses to act in response to prayer, and hence to "need" it in at least some fashion (CD IV/4 1981:105). *Has God, then, freely "subjected" God's own perfect and complete work in sanctification to*

## CONCLUSION

Throughout Barth's "Doctrine of Reconciliation," and particularly in CD IV/2, ¶66, we have seen that Barth lays continual stress upon the perfect work of Christ accomplished on behalf of humanity, a justification and sanctification which can only be appropriated through the action of the Holy Spirit. Barth's doctrine of sanctification, however, left us uncertain as to how human agency might play an active part in working *with* the Holy Spirit to appropriate that sanctification which is already complete in Christ. The cross might be an "indispensable" element to sanctification, and love the power behind it (thus giving us some clues as to the "means" of sanctification), but the issue of human agency had not yet been sufficiently addressed. The Holy Spirit was the continual answer, though at times merely theoretically posited. Certainly, the human agent's active involvement was somehow affirmed by Barth, but the balance lay heavily on the Holy Spirit's "irresistible" and "unimpeded" action to the end that human failure and human cooperation were not satisfactorily accounted for.

Although Barth completed his doctrine of sanctification with these open-ended contours, his work in CD IV/4 took into consideration a more serious "covenant-partnership" between the divine and human agents. It was through prayer that God invited humanity to actively participate with God's own action, and if humans prayed for the Holy Spirit, would God not certainly hear? That all-important pneumatological link now found some connection with the human side of the bridge, and the human agent's role was given a more solid and responsible footing.

In the end, however, God remains Lord, for it is the Holy Spirit alone that bridges the human and divine spheres. It is the Holy Spirit that the Christian is

---

*human responsibility and involvement, i.e. to the human agent's proper appropriation of it through prayerful, active waiting?* Does this "threaten" God's "indissoluble Lordship" in any way, and can a Christian's prayerlessness thwart and threaten God's work in and movement of grace towards her life and the world? And as God "shares" God's own freedom with humanity, through the gracious gift and command of prayer, is God then being exposed to risk, i.e. making Godself "vulnerable" to some degree (cf. Love 1996:420,454) or is God again the supreme agent responsible, not only for *granting* the gift of prayer but also for *causing* the Christian *to pray*, thus protecting God's utter sovereignty? Barth would perhaps answer the former part of the question with a resounding "No" (though he does not address the latter possibility) (cf. note 82, CD III/4 1961:91-2, and Kelsay (1989:179)), but his theology at this point does seem to open the way for such line of questioning, which should perhaps be explored at a further time.



to cry out for. And prayer itself indicates that the action, while human in part, is primarily divine, for the individual places him or herself solely at the "Lord's" resources. God alone initiates, God alone reveals, God alone reconciles, and God alone will redeem. This is the lasting impact of Karl Barth's theology, which is "zealous for God's honor" (cf. CD IV/4 ¶77), yet at the same time invites genuine human action.

## REFERENCES

- Barth, Karl  
1936-77 *Church Dogmatics*. Trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.
- Biggar, Nigel  
1993 *The Hastening that Waits: Karl Barth's Ethics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Blondel, Jean-Luc  
1980 "Prayer and Struggle: Karl Barth's 'The Christian Life.'" *St. Luke's Journal of Theology* 23: 105-15.
- Collins, Alice  
1988 "Barth's Relationship to Schleiermacher: A Reassessment." *Studies in Religion* 17/2: 213-24.
- Kelsay, J.  
1989 "Prayer and Ethics: Reflections on Calvin and Barth." *Harvard Theological Review* 82, 169-184.
- Migliore, Daniel L.  
1998 "Freedom to Pray: Karl Barth's Theology of Prayer." In *Spirituality and Theology, Essays in Honor of Diogenes Allen*, ed. Eric Springsted, 112-23. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Smail, Thomas A.

- 1986 "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit." In *Theology Beyond Christendom, Essays on the Centenary of the Birth of Karl Barth*, ed. J. Thompson, 87-110. Allison Park.

Torrance, Thomas F.

- 1956 "Karl Barth." *Expository Times* 66: 205-209.
- 1986b "My Interaction with Karl Barth." In *How Karl Barth Changed My Mind*. Ed. Donald K. McKim. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Webster, John.

- 1995 *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



# The Passionate Aggression in Creation and the Human Psyche: An Argument For Its Source In and Use By God

JILL L. MCNISH

“Don’t ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that, because what the world needs most is people who have come alive.”

Howard Thurman, quoted by Gil Bailie (1995:xv)

“Seeing is believing, but feeling is God’s own truth.”

Old Irish Proverb

THIS ARTICLE ATTEMPTS TO LOCATE AND ARTICULATE A COMMON SOURCE FOR erotic love, longing, sexuality and aggression (in the broadest sense of that word) in God. It explores aggression and destruction in creation, and the possibility of their relationship with what we sometimes call human “evil” or “sinfulness.” Additionally, it makes the claim that erotic love and longing have the same divine source in the human psyche as destructive aggression.

Could aggression in humankind be a reflection of God’s own aggression? I am far from alone in asking this audacious question. Among others, Gustave Bychowski (1969), Carl Jung (1969), and, more recently, Jack Miles (1995) have analyzed Scripture and argued for a connection between God and human aggression in its more pernicious forms.

Clearly, human beings are the creation of what Rosemarie Haughton calls a “passionate God” — “a phenomenology of divine love for, in, through and between people which means the entire, mysterious and infinitely complex sys-

tem of inter-relationships which is creation, and the Creator in creation” (1981:6).

This article presents a theology of erotic love, longing, *and* aggression that does not have to do only with the human psyche, but the essential source of these phenomena in the Godhead itself. I submit that the passion of God and the passion of humankind are profoundly and inextricably connected one to another. Does God infuse passion in people in order for them to be in relationship with God and each other, to be in partnership with God in continually making all things new? Or, in the alternative, is God the spark of passion within us?

Moshe Halevi Spero has written that

the entire enterprise of outlining the “psychological” underpinnings of religious experience. . . may actually provide relatively accurate perspectives on what is *in essence* a halakhic [religious] reality. Psychological assertions are therefore *quite* relevant and elemental to religious experience, and not as if from without but from within (1992:30).

Spero contends that God addresses us through psychological structures within which God has planted God’s image. Human beings are psychological object-seeking creatures and God makes Godself available to them as an object. Similarly, John McDargh’s book *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religions* begins with the proposition that “as a species we are ‘incurably religious.’ Something in our fundamental nature, something in our heart, compels us to face the faceless universe” (1983:xv).

Spero’s and McDargh’s theses, couched in the sophisticated language of contemporary object-relations theory, are but nuanced explications of Augustine’s cry to God a millennium and a half ago in his *Confessions*: “You stir...[us] to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you” (1991: 2). Alfred North Whitehead, the conceptual founder of process theology, wrote that God “is the lure of feeling, the eternal urge of desire. [God’s] particular relevance to each creative act . . . constitutes [God] the ‘object of desire’. . . establishing the initial phase of each subjective aim” (1929:344). Or, we might think of Meister Eckhart’s Divine, uncreated “*Funklein*” (“spark”), the “*Grund*” (“core”) of the soul, something uncreatable as well as uncreated, the citadel in which one has merely to incarcerate oneself in order to find union with God.



## THE COMMON SOURCE OF SEX AND AGGRESSION IN HUMAN BEINGS

In *The Ego and the Id* (1923), Freud developed a theme that he had introduced in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). In the latter piece, Freud posited two basic classes of instincts. The first was Eros, comprising not only obvious expressions of sexuality, but also the instinct toward self-preservation; the second, an instinct toward destruction that Freud called the "death instinct" (Thanatos). The goal of the latter instinct is to lead organic life back into the inanimate state.

Freud postulated that both kinds of instinct are active in all living substances, although in unequal proportions, so that some one substance might be the principal representative of Eros or Thanatos. The death instinct would find expression, at least in part, as an instinct of destruction directed against the external world and other organisms. However, Freud understood there to be a fundamental "fusion" between the two classes of instinct. The sadistic component of the sexual instinct is an example that Freud was fond of using. Christopher Bollas' book *Forces of Destiny* contains an evocative description of "sadism" in the midst of the expression of healthy eroticism (although Bollas' idiom is characterized by the Winnicottian term "use of an object" rather than "sadism"):

[T]o live a life, to come alive, a person must be able to use objects in a way that assumes such objects service hate and do not require undue reparative work . . . . In lovemaking, foreplay begins as an act of relating. Lovers attend to mutual erotic interests. As the economic factor increases, this element of lovemaking will recede somewhat (though not disappear) as the lovers surrender to that ruthlessness inherent in erotic excitement. This ruthlessness has something to do with a joint loss of consciousness, a thoughtlessness which is incremental to erotic intensity. *It is a necessary ruthlessness as both lovers destroy the relationship in order to plunge into reciprocal orgasmic use. Indeed, the destruction of the relationship is itself pleasurable and the conversion of relating to using transforms ego libido into increased erotic drive.* If the couple cannot assume this essential destructiveness, erotic intensity may not give in to mutual orgasm. Instead, reparation may be the fundamental exchange between such couples with partners entering into prolonged mother-child scenarios, of cuddling, holding, or soothing. *This may be because such persons have not*

been able to experience good destruction of *the object*... (1991: 26-27; emphasis added).

In a similar vein, Freud noted:

[L]ove is with unexpected regularity accompanied by hate (ambivalence), and not only that in human relationships hate is frequently a forerunner of love, but also that in a number of circumstances hate changes into love and love into hate . . . . [C]learly the ground is cut away from under a distinction so fundamental as that between erotic instincts and death instinct, one which presupposes physiological processes running in opposite directions (1960: 59-60).

Konrad Lorenz, a Nobel Prize winner and distinguished pioneer in the field of animal behavior, concluded that aggression of certain animals toward members of their own species is ordinarily not detrimental to the species, but necessary to its preservation. Drawing on Freud, Lorenz argued for the essential spontaneity of the instinct of aggression in human beings. In fact, Lorenz held that it was necessary for aggression to have appropriate outlets: he noted that ultra-permissive child-rearing approaches in which children were “spared all disappointments and indulged in every way” did not result in more peaceful and contented children. To the contrary, such approaches only resulted in the aggressive drive springing “spontaneously” from the inner human being, with the consequence of this method of upbringing being extremely rude and aggressive children (1963:50).

Lorenz applied the descriptive word “damming” to phenomena which tend to restrict the natural flow of instinctive aggression. In fact, he contended that if expressions of aggression are “dammed,” the result is an increase in readiness to react:

If the stimuli normally releasing [aggression] fail to appear for an appreciable period, the organism as a whole is thrown into a state of general unrest and begins to search actively for the missing stimulus. In the simplest cases, this ‘search’ consists only in an increase of random locomotion, in swimming or running around; in the most complicated it may include the highest achievements of learning and insight (1963: 53).



Most relevant in Lorenz' work is his observation that "there is no love without aggression" (1963: 217). He noted that peaceable herd animals do not form permanent friendships and mating arrangements. The social arrangements of such animals is always anonymous. A love bond, even an individual friendship, is found only in animals (such as human beings) with highly developed intra-specific aggression. Although intra-specific aggression exists in some species (such as certain fierce reptiles) without corresponding bonds, bonds cannot exist without aggression. Furthermore, the bond is firmer the more aggressive the animal and species is. Lorenz carefully distinguishes "hate," which he refers to as: "the ugly little brother of love. As opposed to ordinary aggression, it is directed toward one individual, just as love is, and probably hate presupposes the presence of love: one can hate only where one has loved and, even if one denies it, still does" (1963: 217).

These ideas support the conclusion that love and hate, Eros and destruction, stem from the same source in the human psyche, and perhaps beyond the human psyche.

D.W. Winnicott's understanding of the developmental source and origin of aggressive behavior within the person is helpful in this discussion. Like Lorenz, Winnicott saw a close kinship between aggression and love. In her book *Reckoning With Aggression: Theology, Violence and Vitality*, Kathleen Greider found "most tantalizing... [Winnicott's] claim that both violence and lack of vitality are problems of aggression" (1997: 5). Greider's use of the word "vitality" to denote the positive side of aggression, as distinguished from the ordinary understanding of aggression as "violence," is useful from both a psychological and theological/spiritual perspective. One is reminded of that old spiritual sin of *accidie*—one of the "deadly sins" of the spiritual writers of antiquity and the Middle Ages. The classical description of *accidie* depicts it as a state of restlessness and inability to either work or pray.<sup>1</sup> Aggressive vitality "springs from the tendency to grow and master life which seems to be characteristic of all matter" (Thompson, 1974:179). Winnicott put it this way: "If society is in danger it is not because of man's aggressiveness but because of the repression of personal aggressiveness in individuals" (1975:204).

In his paper "Aggression and Its Roots," Winnicott puts forth two meanings for aggression: a reaction to frustration; and one of the two primary sources of an individual's energy (the other source being the erotic) (1990:

<sup>1</sup>F.L. Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, Revised* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 10.

92). Aggression starts out as a simple impulse that leads to motility and the beginnings of exploration. It results in the understanding by the baby of a distinction between what is the self and what is not the self (1990: 94). Eventually, aggressive behavior is a manifestation of excited “baby love.” It is about ruthless, lusty, greedy desire for another person as the source of food and oral pleasure.

At this stage, destruction is incidental to id satisfaction. This is all prior to hate, anger or contempt. Aggression at this early stage of human development is “pre-concerned excited love” (1975: 206). The baby does not appreciate the fact that “what he destroys when excited is the same as that which he values in quiet intervals” (ibid.). Clearly, an infant’s “ruthless” aggression is an aspect of love that survives in mature lovemaking, as described in the lengthy quotation from Bollas.

In Winnicott’s framework, the infant then enters a phase of “concern” that brings with it the capacity to feel guilty for its aggressive treatment of the beloved object. This may be accompanied by anger, which is a defense against the guilt. This is where “fusion” comes in for Winnicott: the baby at this stage is likely to experience erotic and aggressive drives toward the same object at the same time. Winnicott said that “on the erotic side there is both satisfaction-seeking and object-seeking, and on the aggressive side, there is a complex of anger employing muscle eroticism, and of hate, which involves the retention of a good object-*imago* for comparison” (1990:101-102). The object’s survival of the infant’s aggression is the tie that binds. It allows the infant to “use” the object—i.e., to love her as a whole and separate being instead of as just a “bundle of projections” (1975: 221).

The fusion of love and destruction, and particularly Winnicott’s notion of needing to destroy the object that one loves, could well explain the enduring psychological power of the Christ event for twenty centuries. Jesus Christ told his confused disciples: “The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised” (Luke 9:21-22). Christ’s insistence that he *must* suffer and be rejected and killed points to a powerful and convincing psychological theory of atonement. God so loved the world that God let Godself be destroyed in order to be used as a religious love object. Despite all of humankind’s attempts to destroy (crucify) the love of God, that love survived, reappeared and re-presented itself in the form of the resurrected Christ, still bearing the wounds of humanity’s attempt to destroy him. There is truth in Oscar Wilde’s words: “Each man kills the thing he loves.”



The Eucharist is ritualized destruction and incorporation of the beloved object (i.e., Christ) week after week, which comes with the assurance that God in Christ remains with us and for us. This psychological theory of atonement underlines God's perfect understanding of what human beings need in order to really take in the love of another, even including the love of God. Perhaps we human beings could only fully enter into relationship with a God who allowed God's own incarnation (Jesus) to be destroyed for us; who continued to love us and seek relationship with us even after we rejected and tried to destroy him.

### THE FUNCTION OF AGGRESSION

Clearly, preserving one's existence, and the existence of one's species, is a basic goal of aggression. Freud would call this aggression in service of Eros. Winnicott would say that this aggression could be a reaction to frustration, and/or the expenditure of a primary source of an individual's energy. Human beings, like all living organisms, seek to preserve their individual biological existences and that of their species. However, human beings differ from other living creatures in that they have to contend not only with biological imperatives, but with narcissistic needs: what Gregory Rochlin calls "the human need to hold the self inviolate" (1973:2).

The narcissism of human beings, individually and corporately, is injured in an infinite variety of ways in life, big and small: when a marriage or other important relationship ends; when our love for another is unrequited and unreturned; when our nation is defeated in a war; when our sports team loses an important game; when we are fired, laid off, passed over for promotion, or demoted in our job; when someone we consider a friend snubs or betrays us; when we receive a poor or disappointing grade in a course; when we realize that our faces and bodies are not objectively beautiful; when our bodies betray us by getting old, sick, infirm, or tired; when we "lose" on a disputed issue in our church or other organization in which we are highly invested; when we fail at something important to us; when, for any reason, we make fools of ourselves. These are just a few simple examples of narcissistic injuries that can and sometimes do result in outbursts of destructive aggression. Rochlin thus makes a convincing argument that the aggressive instincts directed toward preservation of the biological self do not present the total picture. It is too narrow a focus:

A child's wish to live is no mere biological expression of self-preservation; [a human being's] efforts to survive and the wishes to live are dedicated to the abhorrent significance of [his or her] fate. We do not dismiss ourselves as un-important, nor do we accept our end or forego our relationships. On the contrary, these values, tenaciously held, give self preservation its psychological face, narcissism (Rochlin 1973:4).

Hence, aggression is not merely to be seen as a reaction to frustration or deprivation. Neither is it merely an attack or hostile action. Rather, it can be "variously and continually employed in the process of self-refinement. It leads to self esteem. In these essential developments the relationship of narcissism to aggression is necessarily close." Moreover, "the bond between narcissism and aggression is central to appreciating the role of each in the dynamic development of character as well as clinical disorders" (Rochlin 1973:5). The power of the erotic as the energy behind all art, music, literature, the preparation and delivery of a good lecture or sermon — i.e., all works of passion, including but not limited to lovemaking — has been beautifully articulated by the feminist writer Audre Lorde in her well known and much quoted essay "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" (1984).

The uniquely human use of aggression to preserve and enhance self esteem and character, the disinclination of psychologically healthy people to dismiss themselves as unimportant, the striving to create something beautiful, meaningful or lasting, the connection between swooning sexual longing and exquisite love for another person, the wish to be remembered and loved, at least by one's friends, family and children — these are all aspects of the narcissism that God has given human beings (and only human beings) in order to approach God, one might even say to approach a more Godlike way of being. Interestingly enough, classical Christian doctrine as formulated by Augustine holds that the original sin of Adam and Eve, and the sin inherited by every member of the human race through the ages, is pride. According to this classical view, pride caused humankind to rebel against God and to question the limits set by God upon humanity. In short, it is the "desire to transcend one's creaturely limits and be like God ... *Pride is rebellion against God, and hence the primal sin*" (Suchocki 1995: 21).

But is pride truly rebellion against God, or is it more correctly seen as a manifestation of being made in God's image? The classical view holds that pride causes violence and all other sin (Suchocki 1995: 95). However, this view is not sufficiently nuanced. Certain aspects of the Augustinian description of pride are



reminiscent of what one might more plausibly view as healthy narcissism — the very phenomenon that propels us into meaningful work and relationships.

What is art if not humankind's most direct and sincere attempt to be God-like: to create something beautiful, original, profound, or meaningful out of one's own mind and imagination?

Indeed, it has been said that in great art one is “confronted with the numinous itself, with all its impelling motive power, transcending reason, expressed in sweeping lines and rhythm” (Otto 1924: 69). Great art, like all inspired work, is born of the energy of healthy narcissism, commonly known as pride. Human lives in which there is no pride are tragic; they cannot hold themselves in being. In extreme cases, they lie on the street or sit in their pajamas in mental institutions. These lives lack the desire that is needed to propel them into the world every day, and they suffer from an extreme form of *accidie*. To blame the invidious aspects of the human condition on “pride” *per se* is surely a *reductio ad absurdum*, throwing the baby out with the bath water.

In *The Ego and the Id* Freud observed “a displaceable energy which, neutral in itself, can be added to a qualitatively differentiated erotic or destructive impulse and add to its total cathexis” (1960:34-5). Most relevant to this paper is the query that this raised for Freud:

The only question is where [the displaceable energy] comes from, what it belongs to and what it signifies. . . . I am only putting forth a hypothesis; I have no proof to offer. It seems a plausible view that the displaceable and neutral energy, which is no doubt active both in the ego and id, proceeds from the narcissistic store of libido—that is desexualized Eros . . . . If this displaceable energy is desexualized libido, it may also be de-scribed as *sublimated* energy; for it would still retain the main purpose of Eros — that of uniting and binding — in so far as it helps towards establishing the unity, or tendency to unity, which is particularly characteristic of the ego (ibid.).

Freud's tentative articulation of the existence of neutral “displaceable energy” that can manifest in destruction or Eros, or some combination of the two, provides fertile ground for thinking about the relationship of God with creation and, specifically, with humankind. At birth, all living things are endowed with a psychobiological impulse to survive and thrive (the impulse to self- and species-preservation). Erotic and aggressive energies are essentially interrelated expressions of this impulse (Greider 1997: 34). What Freud calls “displaceable

energy” Greider calls “vitality” or “the life force.” Winnicott, like Freud, saw aggression and love as “fused” throughout the human life span. In a related vein, Harry Guntrip posited that “Hate is love grown angry because of rejection” (1969: 26).

The fourteenth century English mystic Julian of Norwich also articulated the fundamental connection between the common source of what is most elegiac in us with what is most base. In *Showings*, she says that God communicated the following to her:

I am he, the great supreme goodness of every kind of thing; I am he who makes you to love; I am he who makes you to long; I am he, the endless fulfilling of all true desires. For where the soul is highest, noblest, most honourable, still it is lowest, meekest and mildest. And from this foundation in substance we have all the powers of our sensuality by the gift of nature (1978: 296).

But what of negative aggression, the kind that does not lead to fullness of life, of work or of love but rather violence, war, sadomasochism? To take an extreme example, what about the narcissism turned destructive of a Saddam Hussein, who declares, “I will not be humiliated,” and then spitefully causes the release millions of gallons of oil into the sea? Winnicott provided a good starting point for further thought when he said:

The important thing to note about this instinctual aggressiveness is that although it soon becomes something that can be mobilized in the service of hate, it is originally a part of appetite, or of some other form of instinctual love (1990: 88).

### WHERE IS GOD IN ALL OF THIS?

A basic tenet of Judeo-Christian faith, enigmatically stated in Genesis 1:26-27, is that humankind is made in God’s image. Hegel believed that human beings are part of divine self-expression. If being made in God’s image — being part of divine self-expression — means anything, surely it means that the energetic manifestations of human longing and desire, the strivings to love and be loved, to engage in passionate lovemaking, to create works of art, music and literature, to invent, to learn new things and be fascinated with the world of ideas, to



do meaningful work, indeed to know, to love, to worship God, are all reflections and emanations of the Divine One in human life.

Human passion (this is the word I sometimes want to use in the place of Freud's term "displaceable energy," or Greider's "vitality" or "life force") stems from human narcissism, which I believe in its broadest sense encompasses *both* the urge for biological self and species preservation, and the psychological need, uniquely human, to create meaning and value, to be valued and appreciated, to love and be loved. Surely this is God in us if anything is!

It seems plausible, then, to say that human passion bears a qualitative resemblance to Divine passion as we see it playing out in creation. The natural world that God created is not a gentle garden but a jungle of competing forces. Humankind is but a part of a creation consisting of many ineffably complex systems. James Grotstein, in his article "Forgery of the Soul," wrote that the very

...capacity to be evil occurs as one of the unfortunate ritualized consequences when a person seems to be afraid of being prey to a predator and must therefore reenact this fear actively upon a passive victim in order to reify a manic defense so as to insure his or her safety (1984: 220).

In addition, an "unfulfilled desire...can, if intense enough, create a similar sense of loss and pain and so rouse aggression in exactly the same way as an attack" (Klein and Riviere 1964: 6).

Human beings, like all of the billions of systems of creation, interact and compete on an intra-species level and with other systems and organisms of creation. In the many interactions of the world there is violent damage and destruction. Natural selection requires the ruthless elimination of whole species, and the tossing out of non-adaptive attributes of all others. Every creature survives only by the destruction and ingestion of other organisms. This is what it means to be physical creatures in a physical world. This is the creation of the God who conceived and breathed life into us.

If we could imagine a physical world that were somehow arranged so that every system and every individual part of that system could occupy just as much space as it needed or wanted, i.e, if no part of any system ever had to incorporate or impinge on any other part except in such a fashion that it preserved or enhanced the self-being of the other, what sort of world would we have? It would be a world devoid of passion. Gone would be that forceful energy which

makes all living things reckless in their vitality.<sup>2</sup> Gone would be the passion that is the source of our own creativity and passion.

And creation is not finished. It is simply incorrect to say that God *created* the heavens and the earth, because creation is an ongoing, continuous process. Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, in her wonderfully thoughtful and nuanced book *The Fall to Violence*, puts it this way: "Creation is a process that takes place between God and the world, apparently unfolding and turning in on itself and moving yet again in an infinite number of ways" (1995: 86). We see this in the storms, volcanoes, and earthquakes that are constantly changing the earth's topography. Such occurrences cause natural readjustments of the very stuff of which the physical world is made. For example, an earthquake is caused by the repatterning that is inevitable on a planet burning hot in the center, cooler on the periphery and continually contracting. Only when human beings are present in the earthquake area and therefore suffer do we speak of "evil" taking place. The same is true of tidal waves (the result of readjustment of the ocean bed), hurricanes (which have a meteorological cause), and volcanic eruptions (with their release of energy pent up in the earth and needing to find release) (Pittenger 1978: 46).

All of these phenomena represent and demonstrate the aggressiveness of a world that is always in the process of becoming. Humankind, like the rest of creation, is in evolutionary process. In fact, a relatively new field of study has emerged which is helpful to constructing a theological understanding of human aggression. The science of evolutionary psychology draws on the basic principles of evolution articulated by Charles Darwin in order to explain why it is that human beings often forego certain pleasures, and why we occasionally refrain from behaviors that might seem to be in our genetic and evolutionary best interests because these actions may cause others to suffer.

If evolution by natural selection relentlessly favors self-interest, why do human beings live in complex societies and show so much cooperative spirit? In his book, *The Moral Animal*, Robert Wright noted:

There is indeed a force devoted to enticing us into various pleasures that are (or once were) in our genetic interests but do not bring long-term

<sup>2</sup>I am indebted here to the work of the British theologian Austin Farrer, whose out of print book *Love Almighty and Ills Unlimited* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961) contains a very thoughtful attempt to understand and come to terms theologically with the aggressive, destructive forces of the natural world.



happiness to us and may bring great suffering to others. You could call that force the ghost of natural selection. More concretely, you could call it our genes (or *some* of our genes). If it will help to actually use the word evil, there's no reason not to (1996: 368).

However, at some point not that long ago in the course of human evolution these behaviors were denounced by human beings themselves as “evil” and “sinful.” Our religions cursed and proscribed them, offering instead the ideals of self-restraint and love. Both evolution and creation presuppose that existence requires struggle and aggression. This struggle is basically positive, even though it can result in very negative actions — i.e., violent and rapacious actions that cause suffering to others. Nevertheless, we are often impelled to self-abnegation and love. How does this happen? The fleeting pleasures of loveless sex, power, conquest, gluttony, and greed did not ultimately lead to contentment (*ibid.*). Suchocki summarizes it clearly and succinctly when she says:

We understand ourselves as coming into existence through a long process; our story emerges from artifacts our ancestors left behind. And if our creation spans a long period of time, and if God is ever a creative God, then are we not still in the process of our creation? What reason have we to think that we as a race are a finished product, particularly given the raw cruelty to which we are prone? Perhaps our very incompleteness in relation to the criterion of well-being is witness to the continual call of God, luring us toward our further creation (1995:86).<sup>3</sup>

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a French Jesuit and a distinguished paleontologist, thought and wrote extensively about these matters from the unique vantage point of being both a theologian and a scientist. In his two best known works, *The Phenomenon of Man* (1959) and *The Future of Man* (1964), he contended that God has labored through evolution to produce humankind, which alone has the capacity for reflection. Humankind builds societies in which knowledge is developed and handed down. We are growing progressively more conscious. Ultimately, said Teilhard, humanity will “abandon its organo-planetary foothold so as to shift its centre on to the transcendent.” The mind will ultimately rest completely in God (1959: 287-8). As a Christian, Teilhard de Chardin saw

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Andrew Elphinstone (1976:59), arguing that the process of evolution “is finished for humanity.”

Christ as the instrument through which God is unifying the world. How? “By partially immersing himself in things, by becoming ‘element,’ and then, . . . assuming the control and leadership of what we now call evolution” (1959: 294). In the words of St. Paul, the ultimate evolutionary goal is that God shall be “all in all.”

For Teilhard, as well as for many contemporary theologians viewing the myth of the primal couple through the lens of the evolutionary facts of life, *homo sapiens* evolved only through a long process of evolution as an intelligent, reflective, ethical and religious animal. John Hick posits that the earliest human life “must have been a constant struggle against a hostile environment, and capable of savage violence against one’s fellow human beings. . . . Thus existence ‘in the image of God’ was a potentiality for knowledge of and relationship with one’s Maker rather than such knowledge of and relationship as a fully realized state” (Hick 1981: 41). When God summoned us out of the slime of the evolutionary process, we were not given the immediate consciousness of God but rather the potential for developing it. Moral evil that comes from natural egoism and self-regardingness is a natural consequence of our instinctual animal nature. “But our sinful nature in a sinful world is the matrix within which God is gradually creating children for himself out of human animals” (Hick 1981: 45).

According to Hick, we exist at a distance from God’s goal for us not because we have “fallen” from an original state of pristine perfection, per the classical Augustinian conception, but because we have not yet arrived at it. The myth of Adam and Eve must be newly understood in the light of our present knowledge of evolution. The story of being human is about transcending our instinctual nature, and using our God-given passion and creativity in ways that are consistent with the voice of God at the core of us. Adam and Eve’s story is the symbolic representation of the dawning of humankind’s realization that it could use its complexity, intelligence, and libido to act in accordance with God’s will or in opposition to it. Perhaps the primal couple had eaten the infamous fruit thousands of times, but the myth that we find in Genesis represents the first time they experienced the suffering and shame of knowing that this was not what God wanted of them. Martin Smith puts it this way in his book *Reconciliation*:

Ours is a passionate God whose holiness is a “consuming fire,” blazing and radiant. Holiness is not indifferent or neutral or passive, but intense, infinitely sensitive and responsive. God resists our sins by exerting a pressure which we may experience as extremely stressful. . . . God has



disciplinary ways of strategically withdrawing from us, removing our feelings of the divine presence and “handing us over” (St. Paul) to the painful consequences of our sinful habit, so that we experience its futility and wake up to the need for repentance (Smith 1985: 47).

And so our species is evolving, being lured if you will, toward satisfactions more enduring than those things that are merely pleasurable to our sensual, animal nature: promiscuous sex, food, power, property, physical comfort— and we continue in that evolutionary path. The Apostle Paul wrote: “[A]ll of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (2 Cor 3:18). From a Christian perspective, “if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ” (2 Cor 5:17-8).

Undeniably, millions of people still suffer terribly every day. Abominable, sweeping acts of cruelty and violently destructive greed and aggression, individual and corporate, even amounting to outright genocide, still take place in this world. As this article is written, genocide is taking place in Kosovo; India and Pakistan have both developed nuclear capabilities and glare at each other menacingly; individuals and groups (including children) in our own country express murderous rage towards other individuals and groups by shooting them with weapons freely available on the open market. I acknowledge that as an educated, white, middle class woman, I think, speak, and write from a very comfortable and privileged place. Nevertheless, speaking in admittedly broad and general terms, I submit that the consciousness and general welfare of human beings *has* advanced in the brief course of recorded history.

Consider the following examples. In New Testament times, and for many centuries thereafter, the propriety of ownership by some human beings of the persons of other human beings (i.e., slavery) was unquestioned. Now, the very idea is an abomination in virtually every culture. Sanitary conditions have improved for many (although perhaps not most) people in the world. Medical science has come into being and advanced beyond the wildest expectations of human beings of just a century ago. We are capable of alleviating most physical pain and suffering. Anaesthesia allows surgery to be undertaken painlessly, and certain surgeries can even be done today without cutting people at all. Many diseases have been eliminated, and many others can be treated if not cured. The human life expectancy in many places is double what it was only a couple of hundred years ago. Mentally ill people are ordinarily no longer treated as evil,

or as inhabited by demons. Women in modern industrial societies rarely die in childbirth, whereas not many years ago, this was the leading cause of death in women of childbearing years.

In American culture, during this writer's own lifetime, there has been remarkable progress in the dignity that public mores expect us to accord to people who differ from us. Overt expressions of racism and anti-Semitism are no longer acceptable in most circles, and this was certainly not the case for previous generations even in my own memory. During the second half of this century, women have begun to have choices about their lives, and sexual harassment of women in the workplace and elsewhere is no longer winked or chuckled at with a "boys will be boys" attitude. Gay and lesbian people for the very first time in the second half of this century have begun to assert that there can be health and dignity in their psycho-sexual identity, and there is at least the beginning of a public effort to struggle with issues of homophobia. The cold war has ended. Several age old ethnic disputes are being peacefully resolved: apartheid in South Africa, hatred and bloodshed in Northern Ireland, even (albeit slowly and tentatively) between Palestinians and Jews in the Middle East. Communication and contact between and among the peoples and cultures of the world has dramatically increased, with the result that people who are different from each other seem less "other" than they once did.

These are but a few examples evidencing increased moral and ethical development and general improvement in the human condition. Of course, many present day atrocities could easily be cited. Yet, good argument can be made that a larger proportion of humankind, albeit not all of humankind, lives with ever increasing dignity, comfort and moral sensibility. In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud wrote:

I should find it very understandable if someone were to point out the obligatory nature of the course of civilization and were to say, for instance, that the tendencies to a restriction of sexual life or to the institution of a humanitarian ideal at the expense of natural selection were developmental trends which cannot be averted or turned aside and to which it is best for us to yield as though they were necessities of nature... The fateful question for the human species seems to me to be whether and to what extent [humanity's] cultural development will succeed in mastering the disturbances of their communal life by the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction (1961: 111).



Along the same lines, Freud wrote a letter to Albert Einstein in 1932 entitled *Why War?*, which contained the following musings:

My belief is this. For incalculable ages mankind has been passing through a process of evolution of culture. . . . We owe to that process the best of what we have become, as well as a good part of what we suffer from. . . . The process is perhaps comparable to the domestication of certain species of animals and it is undoubtedly accompanied by physical alterations; but we are still unfamiliar with the notion that the evolution of culture is an organic process of this kind. The psychical modifications that go along with the cultural process are striking and unambiguous. They consist of a progressive displacement of instinctual aims and a restriction of instinctual impulses. Sensations which were pleasurable to our ancestors have become indifferent or even intolerant to ourselves; there are organic grounds for the changes in our ethical and aesthetic ideals (1963:146).

Such was some of Freud's thinking on the subject of what we now call "evolutionary psychology." Even this most avid and energetic atheist, this most staunch champion of the centrality of instinctual drives originating in the body, seemed to admit of the possibility that human instinctual impulses may not be static, but evolving.

What does any of this have to do with God? God is "creative becoming," and the world and everything in it is "completely contingent and radically dependent on God as its sole necessary ground" (Pittenger 1978: 62). God participates fully in the world of God's creatures, constantly laying the ground for the next stage of creative process, i.e., constantly "making all things new." God is seen as always in relationship with the world and in communication of Godself to that world. God works in it and through it, unfailingly and unceasingly, to accomplish a purpose or to fulfill an intention that, like God's own character, must be righteous, good and loving (Pittenger 1978:19).

The Genesis creation myths tell us that human beings are made of the "dust of the earth" into which God has "breathed spirit." If we were just dust, physical matter, we would be like the grass that perishes. If we were just spirit, we would be angels. However, "we are flesh, historically embodied, physically embodied, part of the natural order, *but with a difference* since we are conscious, possessed of reason and able to articulate desires and drives" (Pittenger 1978: 24).

God is the energy, the dynamic, passionate life force, inexorably working in the world by the use of “persuasive love” to make us more conscious, more loving and compassionate with each other and more permeable to the experience and knowledge of God. This is a dynamic process that has been ongoing at least since life on earth began. As Norman Pittenger notes, process thought, existentialism and depth psychology agree that human life is nothing if not dynamic, that “it is movement toward a goal; it is the striving to actualize potentialities and thereby to find satisfaction or fulfillment” (Pittenger 1978: 29).

To live fully means to change. In health, there is a dynamic force propelling us as individuals, and as a species, toward integration, creativity, and ever greater consciousness and fulfillment of potentiality. Freud saw this energy. Although he could not (or would not) name it, he certainly alluded to it and puzzled over it. Winnicott saw it too. This energy is dynamic and aggressive. It has its source in the primal core of our being, the place that at first screams to be filled with milk and filled again and again and again, the place that later needs to tear and chew and digest food, the place that later yet longs to unite in sexual fervor with a beloved person who will help mediate the Divine. This energy is the source of humankind’s greatest potentiality, creativity, invention, love, kindness and compassion. It is the source of our longing to know God. It is the energy that brings us into being and keeps us in being, the source of desire that is essential to biological, spiritual and psychic life. When this energy is distorted, it is also the source of corporate racism, genocide, and war, not to mention individual acts of cruelty, violence, sexual exploitation, greed, corruption and murder. The demonic

... is creativity insofar as it diverges strongly from the Divine Creative aims in a way that is violently destructive, and with hate or indifference rather than responsive love. So understood, the demonic is not merely a creature; it is a manifestation of primordial power. And it is in real and deadly opposition to the creator. In another sense, however, it *is* a creature. It could not emerge until there were creatures with sufficient internal power to go strongly against the will of the creator, and with sufficient external power to be violently destructive. On our planet the demonic was only latent in world creativity until the appearance of human beings (Griffin 1991:47).

One of theology’s most vexing and tenacious problems is the pervasive existence of evil in the world. Humanity has always struggled with the terrible fear that God is somehow implicated in it. One need not look too long at the Hebrew Scriptures



to shudder at what God was said to be responsible for. Look at Job! Look at the Amalekites! Look at God's fickle and unfair treatment of King Saul!

In his recent book, *Job and the Mystery of Suffering*, spiritual writer Richard Rohr makes the arresting statement that "God did not create evil but God created a definition of good that seems to include evil" (1996: 45). Whether or not one can accept that, one can hardly deny the proposition that God is surely tolerating evil. God even seems to make use of it. Rohr notes that this is the great work of transformation, "bringing life out of death, and calling into being what does not exist" (Rom 4:17).

The biblical story of Joseph, whose jealous brothers maliciously sold him off into slavery, is illustrative of this point. Years later, when Joseph had become a high Egyptian official, he was able to help his brothers and their families during a time of terrible famine. When the brothers first reencountered Joseph, they were terrified that he would avenge what they had done to him. Instead, Joseph said, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God used it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people" (Gen 50:20-21).

God did not "cause" the annihilation of the ancient Amalekites, the suffering of Job or the torments of Saul. Rather, our prehension of God, like everything else about us, is slowly, but inexorably, becoming more true.

Here, the language and discussion begins to converge upon Winnicott's conception of the developmental stage of "concern." In process thought, the word "prehension" is used to describe a "feeling of concern or grasping by which one whole body becomes related to another whole body" (Miller 1982: 25). Prehension is about mutual interpenetration. Human beings canprehend each other, and probably do so most dramatically in genuine love embodied sexually. Human beings can also prehend aspects of the Divine. According to process theology's conception of a "dipolar" God, God is affected by the world as God affects the world, by the use of persuasive love. There is thus "mutual prehension" between God and human beings.

The terrible acts and motives attributed to God in certain parts of Scripture were not caused or dictated by God at all, but rather were the acts and projections of human beings who, in bursts of misdirected aggression, simply got it wrong. Obviously, we still get it wrong. We continue to make mistakes about how God is or is not working in our lives, and what God wants of us. None of the evolution of which this article speaks means that humankind always and in every particular situation moves forward, or that it never moves backward. To the contrary, there are enormous regressions in our behaviors, as well our as

knowledge and prehension of God. One might cite as examples theological movements on the right (i.e., fundamentalism) and on the left (i.e., the Jesus Seminar) that fail and refuse to see scripture as symbolic, and insist that unless it is literally true it is meaningless as sacred writ. Another example is the Islamic *jihad* which has in recent years been interpreted by some as requiring the death of one who wrote a book deemed contrary to Islamic teaching.

The life force in creation is the living God. It is the force that propels us into life and holds us in being, biologically and psychically. God is working in and through that life force, in us and through us and all of creation. This is the meaning of the following prayer from the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* of the Episcopal Church:

God of unchangeable power and eternal light. . . By the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made. . . . (280).

## SUMMARY

Theories of aggression as “vitality” subject to distortion, as the primordial “life force,” and as “displaceable energy” tie together with concepts of evolutionary psychology and process theology. God is in this force and energy, what Whitehead terms “eternal urge of desire,” and in all of creation including the evolution of humankind. God is in the energy and persuasive love that is luring us as individuals and as a species toward greater consciousness and more accurate and complete prehension of God. God understands perfectly well our human nature and the pernicious paths in which our aggression often leads us. The inevitability of sin given our creaturely nature was understood by Julian of Norwich when she wrote six hundred years ago that “there is an animal will in the lower part which cannot will any good, . . . [and] there is a good will in the higher part which cannot will any evil” (1978:154). Therefore, “sin is necessary” (225) but “there is no kind of wrath in God. . . .” (264). Sin causes great pain and sorrow in life, and that is how it is discouraged — not in hellfire after death. God understands the roots of our psychic deadness (or *accidie*) as well as the misdirected use of our aggression even while God is continually luring us toward good uses of aggression.



God is *for* expressions of human aggression that reflect Eros. That is why such expressions of aggression feel so “right” and “good” to us. Sexual expression with one we love, feeling and showing compassion for those who are hurting, creating or inventing something original, beautiful or meaningful, or pursuing a dream, even though difficult or personally uncomfortable, fighting for what we believe to be right — these are examples of uses of aggression that feel good to us. God opposes, through persuasive love, expressions of human aggression that do not tend to enhance human life, or are abusive, gratuitously violent or destructive of other human beings or other parts of the creative order. That is why these behaviors do not ultimately lead to happiness or contentment.

God meets us where we are, constantly using persuasive love to exact the best from us through the use of the passion, i.e., aggression, that is our inheritance from God and our birthright as human beings, inexorably transforming us “from one degree of glory to another” (2 Cor 3:18).

## REFERENCES

- Augustine  
1991 *Confessions*. Trans. Henry Chadwick. Oxford:Oxford University Press.
- Bailie, Gil  
1995 *Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroads*. New York: Crossroad.
- Bollas, Christopher  
1991 *Forces of Destiny*. London:Free Association Books.
- Bychowski, Gustave  
1968 *Evil in Man: the Anatomy of Hate and Violence*. New York:Grune & Stratton.
- Elphinstone, Andrew  
1976 *Freedom, Suffering and Love*. London: SCM Ltd.

Farrer, Austin

1961 *Love Almighty and Ills Unlimited*. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.,

Freud, Sigmund

1959 *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: Bantam.

1960 *The Ego and the Id*. Trans. Joan Riviere. Rev. and newly ed. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton.

1961 *Civilization and its Discontents*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton.

1963 "Why War?" In *Character and Culture*, ed. Philip Reif, 134-147. New York: Collier.

Greider, Kathleen

1997 *Reckoning With Aggression*. Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox.

Griffin, David Roy

1991 *Evil Revisited*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Grotstein, James

1984 "Forgery of the Soul." In *Evil, Self and Culture*, ed. M.C. Nelson and M. Eigen, 203-26. New York: Human Sciences Press.

Guntrip, Harry

1969 *Schizoid Phenomenon, Object Relations and the Self*. New York: International Universities Press.

Haughton, Rosemarie

1981 *The Passionate God*. Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press.

Hick, John

1981 "An Irenaean Theodicy." In *Encountering Evil: Live Options*



*in Theodicy*, ed. Stephen Davis, 39-68. Atlanta: John Knox.

1977 *Evil and the God of Love*. 2nd Ed. London: MacMillan.

Julian of Norwich

1978 *Showings*. Ramsey, NJ: Paulist.

Jung, Carl

1969 "Answer to Job." In *Collected Works of C.G. Jung*. Vol. 11. Ed. and Trans. R.F.C. Hull, 355-470. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Klein, Melanie and Riviere, Joan

1964 *Love, Hate and Reparation*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co.

Lorde, Audre

1984 *Sister Outsider*. Freedom, CA: Crossing.

Lorenz, Konrad

1963 *On Aggression*. New York: Harcourt Brace.

McDargh, John

1983 *Psychoanalytic Object Relations and the Study of Religion*. New York: University Press of America.

Miles, Jack

1995 *GOD: A Biography*. New York: Knopf.

Miller, Randolph

1982 *The Theory of Christian Education*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press.

Otto, Rudolf

1924 *The Idea of the Holy*. Trans. John W. Harvey. London: Oxford University Press.

Pittenger, Norman

1978 *Cosmic Love and Human Wrong*. Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press.

Ridley, Matt

1996

*The Origins of Virtue: Human Instinct and the Evolution of Cooperation.* London: Viking.

Rochlin, Gregory

1973

*Man's Aggression.* Boston: Gambit.

Rohr, Richard

1996

*Job and the Mystery of Human Suffering.* New York: Crossroad.

Smith, Martin

1985

*Reconciliation.* Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications.

Spero, Moshe Halevi

1992

*Religious Objects as Psychological Structures.* Chicago: University of Chicago.

Suchocki, Marjorie Hewitt

1995

*The Fall to Violence.* New York: Basic Books.

Thompson, Clara

1974

*Interpersonal Psychoanalysis.* Ed. Maurice Green. New York: Basic.

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre

1959

*The Phenomenon of Man.* Trans. Bernard Wall. New York: Harper & Row.

1964

*The Future of Man.* Trans. William Collins Sons & Co. New York: Harper & Row.

Whitehead, Alfred North

1929

*Process and Reality.* New York: The Free Press.

Winnicott, Donald W

1975a

"Use of an Object." In *Psychoanalytic Explorations*, ed. Clare Winnicott, Ray Shepherd, Madelaine Davis. 217-246. New York: Basic.



- 1975b "Aggression in Relation to Emotional Development." In *Through Pediatrics to Psychoanalysis*. ed. Masud Kahn. 204-18. New York: Basic.
- 1990 "Aggression and its Roots." In *Deprivation and Delinquency*, ed. Clare Winnicott, Ray Shepherd and Madelaine Davis. 84-99. New York: Rutledge Press.

Wright, Robert

- 1994 *The Moral Animal*. New York: Pantheon.

# In Search of a Promised Land: American Protestants and the Holy Land at the Turn-of-the-Century

STEPHANIE STIDHAM ROGERS

## INTRODUCTION

THE EMERGENCE OF PALESTINE AS A TRAVEL AND PILGRIMAGE DESTINATION FOR Protestants in the nineteenth and twentieth century has had an effect upon American Protestantism that American church historians have not yet fully explored. Today, Holy Land tourism is a multi-million dollar industry fed partially by American Protestants in search of an ancient religious ethos. Yet many questions about this religious tourism remain, especially regarding its relationship to the creation of the modern state of Israel and Palestinian Christians. Turn-of-the-century tourists saw Arab residents of Ottoman Palestine as primitive at best, and a demonstration of the curse of deicide upon the landscape at worst. The twentieth century has seen the development of numerous parallel sites in Israel uniquely suited for American Protestants' needs and expectations, and this essay will contend that the travel narratives of nineteenth century Protestant pilgrims were instrumental in creating and shaping these desires.

Beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, it became a popular trend within various Protestant denominations to send ministers on a tour of Ottoman Palestine, which was newly emerging in the American consciousness as the land of the Bible. These ministers often published narratives of their travels for a wide, popular audience of the interested or would-be pilgrims. As these narratives were increasingly read, a new genre emerged, and Ottoman Palestine became freighted with new religious meaning for American Protestants. The land of Palestine became a new Protestant pilgrimage site and a screen upon



which the religious idealism of many American Protestants was projected. Protestant ministers created the meaning of the Holy Land for Americans through participation in the pilgrimage narrative genre by supplying their readers with a more “biblical” Holy Land.

This essay analyzes the pilgrimage narratives of nine American Protestant ministers who wrote and preached about their travels to the Holy Land for an eager audience back home. These narratives were written by an array of Protestants, and include works by church historian Philip Schaff (1878), premillennial dispensationalist William E. Blackstone (1892), evangelical Congregationalist Dwight L. Moody (1892), popular orthodox Presbyterian T. DeWitt Talmage (1893), Presbyterian Maltbie D. Babcock (1902), liberal Presbyterian minister, Princeton University professor, and popular novelist Henry Van Dyke (1908), liberal Episcopalian Philips Brooks (1915), liberal Baptist Harry Emerson Fosdick (1927), and Unitarian John Haynes Holmes (1929). In general, liberal Protestant ministers comprised a later generation of pilgrims than that of conservatives and evangelicals. Nevertheless, the pilgrimage accounts of all nine ministers reveal striking similarities that ultimately disclose a familiarity with and allegiance to the forms of a new genre of literature, i.e., that of the Holy Land tour account. Ultimately, the mythologization of Palestine and the Arab people contained in these accounts would reign in American Protestant culture well into the twentieth century. The uniquely Protestant interpretation of the land offered by these narratives referred to the Holy Land as a “fifth gospel,” i.e., a latter-day addition to the deposit of truth of the Bible, or a more immediate and material revelation of divine truth. The geographically located “fifth gospel” was now available for Protestants primarily due to the new ease and affordability of travel for the upper-middle and upper-class in late nineteenth-century American culture.

The Holy Land emerged in these accounts as a Protestant answer to Catholic pilgrimage to Rome, and the land itself garnered the power of a new biblical authority as the “fifth gospel.” The special status and authority of the Holy Land would rest upon several assumptions characteristic of the trend of geopiety. These included a belief in the increased potential for spiritual experience on certain geographical sites; a belief in the irrelevance of history and time; evolutionary development; and in primitive places such as Palestine, a new commitment to Christianity as a religion of place; the fulfillment of prophecy at geographical sites; a vision of contemporary Arabs as primitive, biblical Jews; and a condemnation of Eastern Orthodox Christians that coincided with a Romantic or sentimental Victorian spiritual delight in Nature. In

the United States, Protestants eagerly soaked up this new vision of the primitive biblical East.

One vignette in particular sheds light on this new popularity of Holy Land tours during the Gilded Age. The pilgrimage of Talmage, who has been called “the most popular preacher of the Gilded Age” and likened in his influence during the late nineteenth century to that of Billy Graham in the mid-twentieth century, provides an example of the popular interest with which Protestants regarded such tours (Szasz 1981:18-32). Before his tour, Talmage was overwhelmed with an outpouring of support for his ministry. In addition, his pilgrimage was followed in both the Christian press and the *New York Times*, among other periodicals. Whether it was criticized for sensationalism or lauded for his new spiritual revelations, his tour was watched by many (Talmage 1912:230; see also Macartney 1942). Talmage secured two stones in Palestine—one from Calvary and one from Mount Sinai—to be placed in his new tabernacle in New York City, thus bringing the power of the Holy Land in a concrete way to his own ministry. When he returned, as many as ten thousand admirers turned out for his first public appearance. Thousands were reportedly turned away at the entrance for the popular event over which the Mayor of Brooklyn presided (Banks 1902:171-3). In this instance, many regarded the Holy Land tour of a popular Presbyterian minister as a thrilling event. Ministers thus carried the burden and joy of delivering a new faith drama to Protestants freshly fascinated with the Levant and eager to purchase books describing the newly-rediscovered joys of religious pilgrimage for Protestants during the heyday of Protestant missions.

#### DELIVERING A DRAMA OF FAITH: THE THEATRICALS OF THE HOLY LAND

Tours to the Holy Land by influential Protestant ministers were sensational among Protestants for a number of reasons. They must be seen in the context of the wider availability and budding interest among Americans in travel in general during the nineteenth century. While the daughters and sons of the wealthy went to Europe for education and cultural enrichment on the “grand tour,” and figures such as Theodore Roosevelt went to Africa in search of their elemental, primitive, masculine identity as hunters, Protestant ministers went to the Holy Land in search of the “fifth gospel,” or the elemental origins of Christianity. Travel to the Holy Land signified a new acceptance of religious pilgrim-



age among Protestants and became a means for ministers to engage in higher levels of religious experience not believed to be immediately available at home.

In addition to the new interest in travel, a broader culture of consumerism, geared toward all things Oriental, made the Palestinian landscape an especially appealing and sensational topic. William Leach has shown how Orientalism contributed to the rise of consumer culture during the Gilded Age by simultaneously creating and fulfilling consumer needs. The most popular merchandising theme in the years before World War I was the oriental theme, which hinted at “something slightly impermissible—luxurious, to be sure, but also with touches of life’s underside” (Leach 1993:104). The ubiquity of the lush and exotic oriental theme in turn-of-the-century American consumer culture suggests that Americans may have had an underlying sense that they lacked something exotic, available only in the East, as well as a broader longing for a “sensual life more satisfying than traditional Christianity could endorse” (Leach 1993:105). Best-selling novels depicting sensual romances abroad (in the Orient) fed the new American hunger for all things Eastern. Notably, Holy Land tours were related to this romance genre in an Eastern setting, yet they offered a baptized version of this theme, i.e., a Christian Orientalism.

Ministers traveled to the Levant in order to capture a primitive—yet Christian—exotic past, thus creating a parallel phenomenon geared specifically to a Christian audience. As will be seen, however, the Holy Land differed from the East of Robert Hichen’s best-selling orientalist novels of this period (such as *The Garden of Allah*) in important ways, especially in its calm, holy, and natural atmosphere. In short, a culture that sensationalized all things Oriental was captivated with the idea of a Christian Orient.

Interest in a “Christian Orient” was regarded by travelling ministers as “natural” for turn-of-the-century Christians. Of Jerusalem, Philip Schaff wrote, “no city is of greater interest to a Christian”; of remote Bethlehem he wrote, “Bethlehem is as familiar to us from childhood days as our own home” (Schaff 1878:220, 235). Schaff also defined the most holy sites for Protestants: “Calvary, or Golgotha, is the most sacred spot in Jerusalem and in the world. . . . Genuine or not, it has been for many centuries a center of devotion, the very holy of holies of the largest portion of Christendom” (Schaff 1878:259, 263). Protestant Christians were newly encouraged to look towards particular geographical sites while viewing them as uniquely sacred.

Harry Emerson Fosdick’s Holy Land tour narrative promised to present Christians with a new vision of “the most impressive portion of mankind’s spiritual drama,” which was played out on the hills of Palestine (Fosdick 1927:23). This

spiritual drama promised holy Protestant entertainment in the setting of the otherwise seedy East of popular novels. This interpretation of the land, both theatrical and spiritual, had much to do with the minister's imagination and an attitude that sought to eschew the ordinary in the landscape. Assuring his readers that they were not reading any commonplace version of a Palestine pilgrimage, John Haynes Holmes wrote the following: "What we did was not to see Nazareth, in the ordinary tourist style, but to feel it. We let our imagination play upon it" (Holmes 1929:39). These "feeling" and entertaining elements of the tour were central to the idea of vicarious pilgrimage through travel narrative, wherein the pilgrim grew closer to God through geographical removal to a more holy site. Pilgrims such as Dwight L. Moody insisted that once one visited the Holy Land, one would read the Bible as if for the first time. Similarly, Henry Van Dyke was struck by the idea that he had never really read the Bible before his tour to the Holy Land, because he now realized that it was "a book written in an Oriental atmosphere, filled with the glamour, the imagery, the magniloquence of the East" (Van Dyke 1908:30). For these Holy Land pilgrims, the Bible was no longer ordinary; rather, it was set in the fascinating context of the Levant.

Generally, Protestant pilgrims traveled with flourish and style. For example, the Babcock party's campsite in the Holy Land was comprised of a circle of fifteen tents with a hundred mules and horses picketed outside. The inside of the tents were furnished with Persian rugs, beds, tables, mirrors, and other comfortable furniture. Each night, the party of Maltbie D. Babcock ate a six-course dinner including soup, roast bird, salad, sweets, and dessert with coffee (Babcock 1902:59-61).

Indeed, the well-funded, popular Holy Land tours of well-known Protestant ministers were regarded as momentous events, and their congregants eagerly awaited the written accounts of these tours. In summary, the Holy Land drama presented to Americans by Protestant ministers' travel accounts drew from a new cultural fascination with travel, the setting of the East, and the idea of Christian origins. The Protestant mythology of Palestine as Holy Land emerged from this context and is richly elaborated upon in the Holy Land tour genre.

## THE POWER OF PLACE: DRAMATIC SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

Each of the Holy Land pilgrim accounts recorded once-in-a-lifetime, earth-shattering spiritual experiences while in Palestine. For Protestant ministers, a tour of the Holy Land of Palestine was "a long journey in the spirit, and a short



voyage in the body” (Van Dyke 1908:xi). In traveling to such a holy place, ministers expected a new proximity to the divine, and were not disappointed. Ruminating on this lengthy spiritual voyage, Henry Van Dyke wrote that it was deceptively easy to get to Palestine, “but how to find the Holy Land—ah, that is another question” (1908:4). Van Dyke went so far as to apologize to his readers for his seemingly petty, earthly preoccupation with meeting up with his friends when he disembarked from his steamship in Jaffa. As Dwight L. Moody began his Easter sermon on Calvary, he stated that even though he had been preaching for twenty years, he had “never felt so solemnized as at that moment, never had he felt so much that he must put the shoes from off his feet, for it was holy ground” (Moody 1905:270). Indeed, the trip was a dramatic spiritual experience for Moody, who miraculously saw a vision of the face of Moses in a Jerusalem sunrise.

Similarly, as T. DeWitt Talmage prepared to enter Jerusalem, he recorded his sentiments as elevated, slightly akin to that of the Christian just about to enter the heavenly Jerusalem. When he arrived in Jerusalem, he went directly to Mount Calvary and had what he reported to be “the most solemn and overwhelming hour of [his] life.” His attempts to read two of the biblical accounts of the crucifixion were thwarted by the depth of his emotion. He writes: “I defy any one on this spot to read with firm voice and consecutive utterance the description given by Luke and John of the mightiest scene of all the ages which was enacted here. Our group lying down on the place where the three crosses stood, I read to them, and I think the prayer of the penitent malefactor became the prayer of each one of us” (Talmage 1893:54).

By the time Philip Schaff departed for Palestine in 1877, Palestine had begun to contain a unique meaning as a pilgrimage site for American Christians. He went on a penitential pilgrimage, following the death of his daughter. The tragedy called for a special holiday, a *religious holiday* that would heal his family while allowing them to connect on a deeper level with their Christian faith in Palestine (Schaff 1878:Preface). Although the “poetry” of the Holy Land was somewhat “marred” for Schaff by the Arab and Eastern Orthodox presence, the reality of the experience was nevertheless “deepened” (Schaff 1878:234).

Harry Emerson Fosdick was able to glean new theological understanding by surveying the landscape from key geographically located religious sites. Every moment on a pilgrimage was elevated above normal time, bringing new and fresh revelation and interpretation to pilgrims and their audience back home. Protestant ministers and their audience expected deepened and confirmed religious faith after completing a pilgrimage. Unitarian John Haynes Holmes also felt a special

closeness to the Divine while in Palestine. He attributed this to what he calls the abiding, special presence of God in this Ancient Near Eastern landscape: “Into this scene have come invaders many—soldiers, priests, tourists—all equally destructive in their several ways. But the substance is left—the spirit is still abiding. I felt nearer to Jesus here than I had ever felt before” (Holmes 1929:40). Maltbie T. Babcock felt his “keenest feeling” and his “deepest emotion” as he entered the village of Bethlehem (Babcock 1902:60). Similarly, Henry Van Dyke reported a staggering moment in Jerusalem: “There is no place today where you can feel all this so deeply, so inevitably, so overwhelmingly, as at the gates of Zion. . . . It is a feeling of confusion at first: a bewildering sense of something vast and old and secret” (Van Dyke 1908:51). Each of the Protestant pilgrim ministers expressed the sentiment that God was somehow nearer to earth and humanity in the Levant. For many American Protestants this translated into a feeling that there was something special about the actual earth in Palestine, and that standard political rules would not apply to this place.

#### NEW STONE TABLETS: MATERIAL REVELATION FROM PALESTINE

Protestant ministers were explicit in their connection to the actual land as a shrine, and American audiences were fascinated by this connection. On the nature of the actual physical matter comprising Palestine, Philip Schaff wrote, “Palestine is a library of revelation engraved upon stones” (Schaff 1878:387). The land was a living commentary on the Bible that, according to Schaff, provided a more material gospel during a period when the reliability of the Bible as a scientific or historical source of knowledge had become increasingly untenable. Adding to the chorus of appreciation for the actual physical land, Fosdick agreed that “if there was a country with sermons in stones it is Palestine” (Fosdick 1927:29). Fosdick concluded that he “was reassured that a world in which such an ascent had occurred as these hills had witnessed, from primitive man to the Master, cannot be without spiritual significance at its very center” (Fosdick 1927:35). In a period when Protestant perspectives upon the Bible as a book were rapidly changing, ministers asserted that Palestine was made in stone, unchanging.

While the land itself as physical matter was key to the experiences of geopiety, the landscape was interpreted by pilgrims using a healthy dose of imagination infused with religious desire. For example, Talmage employed his vivid imagination when surveying the Palestine panorama. In the following passage, he il-



luminated the process of not-seeing, or imaginative vision, when he describes the Holy Land landscape:

The flowers of the field are all dead as I write. I saw them blooming in the valleys and the mountains; they ran up the very lips of the cave; they garlanded the neck of the hills like a May queen. They set their banquet of golden cups for the bee, and dripped in drops of honeysuckle for the hummingbird.... Beautiful flowers! Bright flowers! Sweet flowers! But they are all dead now... but their spirits are ever with us (1893:467).

In this passage the reader encounters a war-torn, Palestinian desert landscape of dead (or nonexistent) flowers. Yet Talmage “sees” the spirits of the glorious, verdant landscape of the birds and the bees that made up the Romantic landscape of Palestine of the Bible. The shrine, in this instance, was thought to be simultaneously physically present and physically absent. The faith of the pilgrim made this unique vision possible.

Pilgrims insisted that the land itself was holy in essence, while presenting various interpretations of the material “fifth gospel.” In this vein, John Haynes Holmes wrote that “Palestine, as well as its people, has in its essence a divine reality” (Holmes 1929:16). Henry Van Dyke agreed about this difficult to pinpoint essence, stating that “there was something in that land, surely, some personal and indefinable spirit of place” (Van Dyke 1908:6). When Dwight L. Moody reached the Mount of Olives, he prayed fervently at that particular spot for the return of Christ, asking that God “sanctify their visit to that spot by their growth in grace” (Moody 1900:390). Moody, Holmes, and Van Dyke were committed to the idea of the spiritual importance of various sites. Yet getting at the essence of the physical landscape could be an enormous task, as one often had to ignore what lay in front of her or him in plain sight, providing instead an interpretation that would strengthen the new, posited link between modern Palestine and its biblical past. As will be shown, however, in spite of this stated divine-human connection on a physical site, ministers at times sought to distance themselves from the veneration of the new “revelation in stones,” due to the threat of idolatry and the Protestant critique of religious pilgrimage and relic that has endured since the Reformation.

PROTESTANT PILGRIMAGE? AMERICAN PROTESTANTISM AS A  
RELIGION OF PLACE

The Puritan notion of the errand into the wilderness that characterized the colonization of the American landscape connected a divine mandate to the settlement of a physical countryside. During the nineteenth century, many Protestants looked abroad through missions for new frontiers to claim for Christ. Yet the creation of a holy Christian (Protestant) shrine in the East created theological problems for many would-be Protestant pilgrims. These were resolved in a variety of ways.

One method of distancing the veneration of the Holy Land from any notion of idolatry was to insist upon the otherworldly truth of the gospel and upon Christianity as a religion primarily of the heart and not of place while lauding certain spaces. This option, however, diffused some of the posited spiritual power of the Holy Land. Henry Van Dyke, concerned about the danger of idolatry, wrote a "Psalm of the Unseen Altar" while in Palestine. Unlike the churches in front of him on his Holy Land tour, this sanctuary was an altar of the "heart" rather than of a "shrine" (Van Dyke 1908:122-3).

Philip Schaff also appeared uncomfortable with the intensity of spiritual connection to material elements in the Holy Land, which were physical rather than purely spiritual. Surveying Calvary he wrote, "there is a better Calvary, which, like the manger of the nativity and the spot of the Ascension, has a spiritual omnipresence in Christendom, and is imbedded in the memory and affection of every believer" (Schaff 1878:270). Schaff represented a common conviction among preachers who sought to clarify the nature of their commitment to the idea of a holy sight and to distance themselves from the evil of idolatry. Maltbie D. Babcock, like Schaff, was concerned about the potential for idolatry at the sight of the cross and insisted that in "the true cross we may find in supreme loyalty to the will of God" (Babcock 1902:89). Nevertheless, Babcock wanted to retain the idea of a pilgrimage site for Protestant Christians in Jerusalem. He writes, "Jerusalem, more than Rome or Greece, is the center of light for the whole earth" (Babcock 1902:74). Behind this statement is a provision for a Protestant alternative and a rejection of both Roman Catholicism and modern philosophy.

Fosdick also noted this paradox for Protestants. Christians, he claimed, must not become excessively caught up in the exegesis of the newly rediscovered Holy Land by attempting to understand Christ purely in terms of his environment. For Fosdick, the environment did not provide the only key for under-



standing Jesus—even though it provided a powerful one. Yet the contrast between the Spirit of Jesus on the one hand, and historic Christianity or Palestine on the other, was especially striking in Palestine, where Fosdick was forced to conclude that “in the end even the traveler who at first is shocked discovers the real Jerusalem” (Fosdick 1927:99). Nevertheless, the real Jerusalem lay in the hearts and minds of believers rather than in a particular landscape or site when one is concerned about the dangers of idolatry.

According to Schaff, Fosdick, and others, one must always keep “real” spiritual Christianity in tension with the material revelation offered by the Holy Land. It was necessary for these pilgrims to make disclaimers in their narratives, stating that Christianity cannot be fully understood through the exegesis of the Holy Land. This disclaimer revealed the extent to which the Holy Land had captured popular imagination and influenced popular theology. Protestant leaders wanted to retain the idea of pilgrimage, while erasing its negative associations.

When negative experiences occurred during pilgrimages, however, they were successfully brought under the rubrics of the Protestant geopious genre through the use of a negative prophetic interpretation, especially that of the idea of the curse upon the land of deicide, i.e., Christ-killing. This disassociation with the death of Christ by Christians has historically undergirded anti-Semitic interpretations of society and the landscape. Therefore, negative experiences in the Holy Land were thought to evidence the ever-present curse of Christ-killing inflicted upon the land in ancient times by those who participated in the execution of Jesus.

#### PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT AND PLACE: THE CURSE OF DEICIDE

Protestant pilgrimage accounts further distanced themselves from the danger of idolatry of the land and the crucifixion of Christ upon it through the use of prophetic fulfillment to explain the physical barrenness of the Holy Land and the poverty of its inhabitants. This realistic vision was characterized by tragic sights and eerie senses of curse while traversing the land, and augmented the general sense of drama with which pilgrim ministers recorded their Holy Land tours for popular readership. Dwight L. Moody attributed the “mean condition of Palestine” as being “in accord with prophecy.” In addition, when Moody saw some red poppies on the East Temple wall in Jerusalem, he said, “Look there! Drops of blood, a symbol for the blood shed for

sin! It seems as though the ground itself is testifying for Christ against the unbelief of the city” (Moody 1900:390-2). According to many of the pilgrim ministers, when Christians toured the Holy Land they were able to view the prophetic curse upon the land as tourists or spectators without participating in its negative effects.

For pilgrims, Palestine was simultaneously both touched by God and deserted by God. Reflecting upon the paradoxical curse on the Holy Land and its inhabitants for killing Christ, or deicide, Philip Schaff wrote that Jerusalem was “the most holy, and the most unholy place on earth” (Schaff 1878:232). Phillips Brooks also noted that in Samaria, where countless columns lie in ruin and the population is tortured by swarms of fleas, “the prophecy seems strangely fulfilled” (Brooks 1915:65). Natives of the land, in this view, continued to reap the punishment for sins committed hundreds of years before. Viewing their sad condition, pilgrims were reassured of the truth of their understanding of biblical prophecy and witness to a spiritual drama.

Maltbie D. Babcock viewed the lack of civilization in Jericho and noted it as a sign of the fulfillment of “every” negative prophecy. He wrote that “Jericho has fulfilled every prophecy in its degeneracy and degradation, being only a collection of hovels and Bedouin tents, and only a sign or two left that ever a city stood here” (Babcock 1902:71). Presumably, the lack of a flourishing, modern town was a sign of God’s active displeasure with the poverty-stricken inhabitants of the Holy Land.

For dispensational premillennialists, the idea of a curse upon the Jews and the land, coexistent with their role as a special chosen people, loomed large in their theology of the Holy Land. It is interesting to note, however, that when Blackstone traveled to Jerusalem he became convinced that it must return to Jewish hands after being “so long trodden down by the Gentiles” (Blackstone 1892:67). Indeed, the Holy Land with its Palestinian population spoke to Blackstone of the Jewishness of Christianity: “A Virgin Jewess was the mother of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus was a Jew, and all the light and joy of his salvation has come to us through Israel” (1892:69). Jews were superior to all other races, according to Blackstone. Given a free chance, Jews will “outstrip all competitors and rise to leadership in every nation” (1892:70). According to Blackstone, for Israel to rise to its evolutionary and millennial superiority, it must be freed from the earthly solicitude of bondage to the heathen and given the Holy Land of Palestine as its sole possession. The fact that this had not already happened was due to the curse of deicide upon the land. The special favor of God notwithstanding, Blackstone claimed that the Jews continued to reap the curses of



deicide. So convinced of the truth of these prophecies was Blackstone that he housed a strategic cache of copies of his popular dispensational premillennialist work, *Jesus is Coming*, in Palestine so that Jews would be able to read it and convert during the imminent “time of Jacob’s trouble.”

Harry Emerson Fosdick also noted the fulfillment of prophetic curse when he surveyed the inhabitants of the land, but connected it instead to the lives of contemporary Arabs. One story revealed this spiritual enlightenment that Protestants such as Fosdick found remarkably uncanny:

As we turned to go, dropping backshish into the hand of a tattooed Bedouin woman who sat lonely among the ruins in sight of her tattered tents, the mist, which all the morning had hung thick among the hills, condensed into a sudden driving rain, and we left the forsaken jumble of stones [ruins] with the Master’s words oppressively meaningful: ‘Woe unto thee, Chorazin’ (Fosdick 1927:205).

Pilgrims such as Fosdick noted the fulfillment of biblical curse and prophecy both in their vision of the local Arabs and Jews as pitiful, and in the actual state of the land (when they were not lauding it for its immediacy to the biblical past). Again, the interpretation of what one sees takes on a markedly spiritual tone in Palestine, where God has touched the earth in a more material way than anywhere else in the world.

The idea of a prophetic curse upon a land and its inhabitants thus took on different forms. For some, the curse was upon the Arabs, because they continue to live in the barren, desolate land. For others, the curse of prophecy remained upon the heads of the Jews, many of whom were nevertheless to be saved in the end times. In either case physical presence on a site at a particular moment was key to the geopious understanding of the Divine/human relationship. The danger of idolatry was thus kept in check by an interpretation of negative physical phenomena. These phenomena were transformed into prophetic fulfillment that bolstered the posited biblicalism of the land, rather than as a potential scar upon the face of the Holy landscape.

### “OUR ARAB”: PRIMITIVISM AND VISIONS OF ARAB CULTURE

The American or Western gaze eastward has been aptly characterized by Edward Said’s term “orientalism.” In *Orientalism*, Said writes that Western culture

“gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (Said 1978:3). Because the Orient or the Levant was an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, it is important to note that Western analyses such as pilgrim narratives could participate in the discourse of orientalism, which Said has written is short for a “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (1978:10). If the indigenous population of Palestine was viewed as primitive, it would eventually follow that more civilized Jews could take rightful ownership of the land under the authority of biblical prophecy and the survival and dominance of the most fit races.

In this vein, Protestant ministers on Holy Land tours largely identified the Arab population of Palestine with primitive biblical Jews. Indeed, the Holy Land pilgrimage accounts contained a wooden representation of the other, seeing Arabs as a part of the primitive biblical scenery or backdrop. The idea that Palestine and its inhabitants remained the same while the wheels of Anglo-Saxon intellectual development hummed for centuries characterized the turn-of-the-century American pilgrim preacher’s view of the landscape once he arrived in Palestine.

The control of Christian holy sites by “inferior” Muslims was especially aggravating to Protestant pilgrims. Phillips Brooks, for example, wrote, “it is sad to see how Muslim power rules here. The very keys of the Holy Sepulchre are kept by the Mohammedans!” (Brooks 1915:73). Sharing these sentiments, T. DeWitt Talmage was so dismayed at Muslim control of Calvary that he attempted to barter with the owners of the site for its purchase, “for the sake of all Christendom.” Likewise, Dwight L. Moody was deeply wounded by the sight of Muslim guards at the Holy Sepulchre and at the Church of the Nativity (Moody 1938:137). Van Dyke wrote poignantly that “it hurts to see it all in Moslem hands” (Van Dyke 1908:78). Muslim ownership of Christian holy sites was an area of great consternation for pilgrims. It posed a potential contradiction to the American mythology of the Holy Land because it made important physical sites appear less biblical.

Pilgrims were ready for the seeming contradiction presented by the challenge of Arab/ Muslim ownership and control with a unique snapshot version of Arab culture in narratives. Philip Schaff wrote that in the Orient all is “primitive” to Europeans and Americans, and he immediately noted the “semi-barbarous character and condition of the inhabitants, both Muslims and nominal Christians” (Schaff 1878:209). Phillips Brooks considered the Arabs “dirty” and “rascally looking” people who inhabit “vile hovels” (Brooks 1915:63). They were



suspected of being especially conniving due to the appearance of their culture to Western eyes. Yet notably the presence of the Arabs offered Western tourists a rare opportunity to view ancient history. Henry Van Dyke's desire to eschew civilization while in the Levant was connected to his desire to escape to the past. Van Dyke wrote, "I want to get away from [civilization]; to return into the long past, which was also the hidden present, and to lose myself a little there, to the end that I find myself again" (Van Dyke 1908:5). For Van Dyke and other pilgrims, the Western image of the Arabs presented one with an opportunity to lose oneself in the primitive biblical past and to make a more direct connection with the divine.

Harry Emerson Fosdick added to the Orientalist chorus, as did John Haynes Holmes, urging Westerners to act with benevolent paternalism towards their inferiors, the Arabs, by seeking to win over their hearts. This Zionist injunction, however, did not mean forfeiting the land. Each minister who discussed Zionism was in full support of it. Those more civilized or "fit" were destined to rule. Fosdick wrote:

The Jew comes with the very qualities which the Arab lacks—energy, vitality, aggressiveness, knowledge of the methods of modern science—and the Arab has not the faintest chance in competition. . . . This knowledge makes the Arab afraid and angry and the Jew confident and aggressive (Fosdick 1927:281).

In this view, Arabs were enraged by their awareness of their racial inferiority; nevertheless, as primitives they were impotent to do anything about it. Thus, like children, they must be protected from themselves by the benevolence of their superiors.

When T. DeWitt Talmage departed from Jerusalem, the pious thought came upon his mind that the next Jerusalem he saw would be the heavenly one. Yet he was drawn away from purely spiritual thoughts when he was confronted with the sensuality of the female "natives," especially in Samaria. Visiting an ancient well and seeing local women at work, he wrote, "there is Rachel watering the camels. There are young men and maidens looking at each other roughly bewitchingly." At this juncture in his book, a Rococo engraving depicting two bejeweled, reclining "modern women of Samaria" was included. One woman lay sensually along the ground against the other, who leaned against an ornate wall with her arm draped behind her head. Through half-opened eyes they gazed dissolutely forward over an oriental rug holding pottery in disarray (Talmage 1893:71-3). In this way, Protestant pilgrims were able to connect with the popu-

lar vision of the East as a side interest for Americans back home fascinated with primitivism. They delivered a popular vision of Arab culture while adding a biblical twist in novelistic style.

When Henry Van Dyke saw an elderly Arab man, he wrote that “the unspeakable solemnity of old Father Abraham’s face is lit up, now and then, with the flicker of a resistless smile.” Van Dyke also saw the boy Jesus working with his father when he peeked into a carpenter’s shop in Nazareth (Van Dyke 1908:12). Philip Schaff similarly noted that the beautiful Arab Christian women contrasted favorably with “the ignorance and degradation of women in purely Mohammedan villages” (Schaff 1878:324). The beauty of Arab women, for Schaff, was linked both to the “influence of the Virgin Mary” and to “Crusader blood.” For Fosdick, Arab women resembled the women of the biblical past. Seeing a group of gaily dressed Arab women returning from a festival, Fosdick “almost expected them to break into the ancient song, ‘Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands’” (Fosdick 1927:102). Like Arab men, Arab women called forth certain associations and revealed more sensual elements of the Orientalist discourse. Christian pilgrims to Palestine transformed modern Arabs into the primitive Jews of the Bible. In this view, the past and the present are the same when one is present in Palestine.

This primitivism was characterized by the idea that history was a mere blink in ancient lands. When Talmage landed on the soil of Palestine, he believed that the nineteen centuries that had passed since the time of Christ were like the “blink of an eye.” After capturing this “fifth gospel” in the pages of his journals, he would present it in raw, unadulterated form to the masses back home in America. Talmage was careful to emphasize in the preface of *From Manger to Throne* that his book delivered immediate experience of the sensational East, and was not encumbered with scholarly Latin or Greek. For Talmage, evolutionary development among primitive Arabs had been completely stalled through lack of contact with Anglo-Saxonism (Talmage 1893:45). The land of Palestine was a new, primitive text for the Protestant Anglo-Saxon to read and exegete, providing a clearer, more direct link to the divine.

Alluding to the immediacy of the gospels in primitive Palestine, so customary of the Holy Land tour genre, Philip Schaff wrote that “manners and customs are so stationary in the East, that you are transferred as if by magic to the age of the apostles, the prophets, and the patriarchs. . . . Palestine has not been ineptly termed ‘the fifth gospel.’” When Schaff looked at the women and children gleaning after the reapers in the grainfields, he saw Ruth in the field of Boaz



(Schaff 1878:221). This posited eternal sameness of Palestine and Arab culture struck Schaff's imagination:

For eighteen hundred seasons the earth has now renewed her carpet of verdure, and seen it again decay. Yet the skies and the field, the rocks and the hills, and the valleys around, remain unchanged, and are still the same as when the glory of the Lord shone about the shepherds, and the song of the multitude of the heavenly host resounded among the hills (1878:222).

Protestant pilgrims such as Schaff imagined that little or nothing has changed, and thus felt able to connect in a new, more concrete way with the events described in the Bible when they saw "primitive" or stationary Arabs.

Phillips Brooks shared warmly in this sense of immediacy and transhistorical experience among the civilized visitors to Palestine. Vicarious pilgrims (i.e., the readers of Holy Land travel accounts) were assured that mountains and views are just what they were in Elijah's time, and the sights seen on horseback may have been the sites of actual unchanged scenes from the life of Christ. He reflected upon this immediacy as follows:

These last two weeks have been like a curious sort of dream; all the old Bible story has seemed so strangely about us, the great flocks of sheep that we meet everywhere, wandering with their wild shepherds over the hills... the sowers in the fields scattering their seed, half on the stony ground (it is almost paved with stones) and half among the great thorn bushes that grow up everywhere... and the families with mules and asses, women and children, who seem to have no purpose in their travelling but just to fill up your picture for you (Brooks 1915:50-1).

By being transformed (unknowingly) into examples of ancient biblical Jews, modern-day Palestinians conveniently formed an integral part of the Holy Land backdrop. They functioned as living history under the generalized assumption that their culture had experienced little or no change over the centuries.

Fosdick also noted the immediacy of his surroundings and their direct connection to the time of the Bible. He noted that "in no country that I ever visited do the old and the new so strangely jostle as in Palestine" (Fosdick 1927:26). Like others, when Fosdick viewed the Arabs, he transformed them into ancient biblical Jews. When he went to Bethlehem, he wrote of an encounter that was for him a direct encounter with the past: "I went out to Bethlehem one day of a

purpose to neglect the later, larger memories of Christ's nativity, and to think only of David. I found what I wanted. I saw him. He was a sturdy, Arab shepherd boy, ruddy, a lad with fine eyes and of a handsome appearance" (1927:100). Later, at the Dead Sea, Fosdick came upon another David: "David came upon us, he was a handsome, strapping youthful Arab.... I shall never think of David the fugitive again without re-seeing that picturesque and sturdy Arab youth who came in from the wilderness" (1927:105). Fosdick could not help seeing everywhere what he called "the origins." He believed that the Arabs of the desert (the Bedouins) were the true, ancient, Semites; indeed, "for a vivid visualization of those early, crude beginnings one need not trust his imagination," according to Fosdick (1927:124). Rather, all of the biblical history lay before the pilgrim in "plain sight."

Similarly, John Haynes Holmes noted as he traveled on his pilgrimage that "it seemed as though the years had rolled away, and we were back in the days of the Nazarene" (Holmes 1929:37). This commitment to the landscape as unchanged was also evident in Holmes's vision of Nazareth: "But these low, stone houses were not unlike those which Jesus knew; this shepherd and his sheep the young lad must have seen a thousand times; and the shelter of the hills, threaded by its deep paths and winding camel tracks, must have looked to him precisely as it did to me" (1929:37).

When American Protestant pilgrims journeyed to Palestine, they mythologized the landscape and Arab culture as frozen in time and contemporary Arabs as "just like" the Jews of the Bible several centuries ago. This mythology of the timelessness and primitiveness of Arab identity remained central in the Protestant Holy Land tour genre for several decades. The Western style of gazing eastward that Said has characterized as "orientalism" is not wrongly used to describe the perspectives of Protestant pilgrims, who revealed that modern day Palestinians provided them with an historical backdrop for their religious tourism. The impact of this perspective upon American political opinion and policy toward Palestine in this period has yet to be fully explored.

### "CIVILIZATION" AND "NATURE" IN THE HOLY LAND

Protestant pilgrims were somewhat confused and undecided about the role of civilization and nature in the Holy Land and ruminated on this topic at length. Though civilization gave them their knowledge and credentials as Anglo-Saxon males, they recognized that civilization could corrupt and that



it had the potential to banish the religious romance of the Holy Land. For example, Talmage wrote that he was glad that he was able to see the Holy Land before inevitable civilized development occurred. When a planned train from Jaffa to Jerusalem was realized, he noted, one would no longer need physical strength and diligence on such tours. Instead, sadly, anyone would be able to respond to the conductor's cry, "all aboard for Jerusalem!" (Talmage 1893:52). The conflict between the excesses and the benefits of civilization was somewhat resolved, however, as Talmage presented his trip in the best possible light. At the moment of the book's production, he represented the pinnacle of what white civilization could offer, combined with the pristine, untouched, blank slate of a holy, biblical landscape unspoiled by the excesses of this same civilization. The abundance of God afforded by the land notwithstanding, Talmage claimed that "[n]othing but Christian civilization will ever roll back the influences which are spoiling the Egyptians." Yet fortunately, the lack of civilization in the Orient had preserved the Orient as a record of the Christian past. This conundrum, i.e., placing the benefits and costs of Anglo-Saxon civilization at odds with each other, was a paradoxical theme running through the Holy Land tour genre.

The transformation of social anxieties into physical ones was also apparent in the Holy Land tour genre's discourse on "civilization" and "nature." In contrast to the "civilized" American city with all of its social problems, the landscape of Palestine was unencumbered. Talmage's elegant sermon rhetoric back home denounced the evils of urban life (Szasz 1981:30). In contrast to the ugly lives of urban immigrant children, Christ's childhood was a fresh and direct encounter with nature. His boyhood was spent "among birds and flowers" while "drinking from wells and chasing butterflies" (Talmage 1893:187-8). There were no factories or bureaucratization in Christ's childhood. The only disruptions, according to Talmage, came from majestic exhibitions of the power of nature.

Some pilgrims spiritualized the imagined clash between civilization and nature. For Schaff, the victory of Christianity in Palestine must be a spiritual victory rather than an earthly, civilized one. Christians must not make the mistake of the Crusaders once again. Fosdick also noted that "if one would get at the real Jerusalem as it was at first, one must leave the present city altogether" (Fosdick 1927:108). The true Holy Land was actually found in the areas where "primitive" Arabs reside close to nature: "One lives here in the atmosphere of the *Arabian Nights*. The world of normal regularity and scientific law grows dim and the mind is transported back to pre-scientific days, when anything

could happen and everything that did happen was immediately ascribed to God" (Fosdick 1927:137).

The audience for Holy Land tour accounts, however, was the geographically distant civilized white American male. According to T. DeWitt Talmage, his account (*From Manger to Throne*) was a life of Christ which "a business man, getting home at eight o'clock at night and starting from home next morning at seven o'clock may profitably take up, and in the few minutes before he starts and after he returns, read in snatches and understand" (1893:1). Talmage here was specific about the civilized racial stream of which he is a part, positioning himself at the forefront of the evolutionary development of the Anglo-Saxon race, citing with pride his white forebears:

We shall tell the story in Anglo-Saxon, the language in which John Bunyan dreamed and William Shakespeare dramatized, and Longfellow romanced and John Milton sang, and George Whitfield thundered. What is the use of dragging dead languages into the service of such a book?... Blessed to me was the hour when my mother taught me how to frame the first sentence out of it, and my last word on earth shall be a draught upon its inexhaustible treasury (1893:2).

Talmage cited his racial pride and linked this pride to his choice to write a less scholarly book in the vernacular English, or Anglo-Saxon. His own language, English, was loaded with evolutionary superiority coming from ages of civilized intellectual development. In fact, all of the intellectual developments of the world had emptied themselves into the "ocean" of Anglo-Saxonism. This Anglo-Saxonism, therefore, was superior to dead languages, and the civilized middle-class, white, male reader should know that the language and culture he received at his mother's knee was an especially great one, if not the greatest. The Protestant minister viewed a primitive Arab biblical landscape, interpreted it in terms of Anglo-Saxon civilization, and made it available to the same more refined culture. They simply chose not to regard Arab Christians as their fellows in any sense.

These ministers typically brought several volumes of learned scholarship on their tours of primitive biblical lands in consonance with typical journeys of civilized males to uncivilized lands at the turn-of-the-century. It was necessary for Talmage to load the saddlebags of his horse on his journey with many volumes of learned books. In order to produce *From Manger to Throne*, he claimed to have "ransacked the world of literature, sacred and secular" (1893:2). He provided a lengthy list of the scholarly tomes to which he was indebted, thus asserting his



qualifications as a learned authority on the life of Christ. The theme of the manly Anglo-Saxon male abroad, viewing the untrammelled pristine biblical past through the lens of civilization, was represented in his discourse. Thus, readers and vicarious pilgrims were assured that there was a strong intellectual heritage undergirding his observations of the primitive, elemental, biblical landscape.

Also evident in the Holy Land tour genre was the influence of Romantic religion, especially with its lack of concern for evil, pain, and death and the treatment of sin as blindness to nature. The commitment to the ideal of immediate awareness of God through sense-experience of nature and landscape in the Holy Land was related to the Transcendentalist mood sweeping antebellum America (Ahlstrom 1972:599). Perhaps the distant land of Palestine allowed popular, orthodox Presbyterian preachers the intellectual space to experiment with such ideas regarding the divine in nature in a safe way.

Most of the travel accounts called forth a Romantic Christ in direct communion with nature and in rejection of the excesses of civilization. For example, Talmage wrote: "One day I see that Divine boy, the wind flurrying his hair over his sun-browned forehead, standing on a hilltop" (Talmage 1893:186). Jesus' encounter with nature was pure and direct, as was that of the English Romantic poets: "[T]hese mountains and seas could not have touched his eye without irradiating his entire nature with their magnificence" (1893:186). In some senses, the Palestine landscape itself became divine. God channeled important prophetic messages and power through the conduit of nature, "and all this spring and song and grass and sunshine and shadow woven into the most exquisite nature that ever breathed or wept or sung or suffered" (1893:187). The modern city may be "stinking and evil," but Palestine, the land of Christ's youth, like Wordsworth's lake district, remained pure and natural, ready for observation by more civilized practitioners.

Adding to the chorus of the celebration of nature over civilization, Philip Schaff concluded that "nature cannot be destroyed by the mismanagement of the Ottomans" (Schaff 1878:388). Fosdick weighed in with the conviction that "nature is the true pilgrim's Palestine" (Fosdick 1927:21). For Fosdick, the Master's world was an out-of-doors world with flowers, husbandmen, children, and God. When Fosdick surveyed the landscape, he concluded that "[t]here is hardly a hillslope in that blossoming land in springtime on which the Master could not point to the profuse and brilliant beauty of the flowers, and one who walks by the Sea of Galilee finds Wordsworth's picture of the daffodils of England true to the poppies and anemones of Palestine" (1927:184). Similarly, Maltbie D. Babcock identified the American pilgrim's love for the Holy Land with the Ro-

mantic poet's love for England, stating to friends and admirers back home that he favored the poems of Wordsworth during his time in Palestine (Robinson 1904:73). The celebration of God's presence in nature that Holy Land tours often brought about for Protestant ministers recalled for them the English Romantic poets' love for the British countryside.

This framework, which juxtaposed the benefits and disadvantages of civilization and nature, adds to the picture of orientalism in the Holy Land tour genre regarding Arabs. Like Americans who travel to Africa strictly in order to view wildlife and topography while viewing Africans as savages, Americans who traveled East were forced to integrate various stimuli into the primitivist perspective in order to conjure biblical primitivism. Civilization was an asset only for those distant from primitive origins. Nature, on the other hand, was an asset to areas and peoples deemed closer to relevant religious origins. The civilization discourse regarding the primitive biblical past received a new challenge, however, when pilgrims confronted the shrines of the Eastern churches.

### THE OUT-OF-DOORS GOSPEL

The twentieth century would see the development of a multitude of Protestant parallel sites in Palestine—a clear rejection of the centuries-old orthodox shrines. Protestants did not often identify with other Christians in Palestine. Instead, they treated them with hostility and disdain. One representation of the idea of clash between “civilization” and “nature” discussed above is exemplified in the insistence by many Protestant ministers that the out-of-doors was the true pilgrimage site, as opposed to the sacramental sites offered by Eastern Christian churches. Upon seeing the Eastern churches, Philip Schaff lamented that the Holy Land was “fearfully desolate and neglected now”—the abundance of nature was nowhere to be seen (Schaff 1878:207). These Eastern churches, for Philip Schaff, remained unchanged like the Bedouin Arabs: the “Armenians, Nestorian, and Copts have been providentially preserved in a petrified state” (1878:393). In contrast, the out-of-doors remained pure and untrammelled—more ready for analysis by Protestant preachers.

According to Philip Schaff, it was no heresy to dissent from any of the “monkish” traditions concerning the holy places in Palestine, because the church has never claimed geographical and topographical infallibility. He, along with others, remained convinced that Eastern Christians were idolaters who were misguided in their attempts to venerate the Christian past in Palestine. Dwight



L. Moody engaged in a heartfelt conversation with an Eastern Orthodox priest from America while in the Holy Land, urging him to preach the gospel of Christ to his people, while encouraging him to be “another Luther” to his “superstitious” and “deceptive” people (Moody 1905:273). Similarly, John Haynes Holmes wrote the following condemnation of Eastern Orthodox Christians: “It is a beautiful system—build a church, give it a reputation through the world as the place where Jesus did something or other, and then sit at the seat of customs and rake in the money of those who have to see everything that is properly advertised” (Holmes 1929:38). When Protestant preachers looked at the Eastern church, they were overwhelmed with what they saw as greed and idolatrous behavior. Clearly, they viewed their own veneration and retailing of the Holy Land in a different light.

Harry Emerson Fosdick also lauded the out-of-doors as the place where true pilgrims remember the life of Christ, as opposed to the indoor shrines offered by Eastern Christians. As Fosdick put it: “It is only the out-of-doors that matters much [in the Holy Land]. Almost everything that men have put under a roof they have spoiled for the intelligent” (Fosdick 1927:9). After making this observation and planning to spend his entire pilgrimage out-of-doors (Fosdick eschewed contact with civilization by refusing to ride trains or stay in hotels; instead, he only rode a camel and camped), Fosdick attacked the Eastern church for its greed and worldliness: “Wherever they have found an excuse they have built a chapel or a church and ecclesiastical hangers-on have gathered there to live under the benefactions of the pilgrims. This is an ugly side to Palestine but it has one good effect: it drives the traveler out-of-doors” (1927:20). Fosdick, as a Protestant, sought to differentiate himself from the long tradition of Catholic pilgrimage to shrines that the Protestant reformers had criticized so harshly. He and other Protestants found the true Holy Land of Christ in the natural out-of-doors in a way that was suffused with popular Romantic sensibilities and Victorian sentimentalism.

Henry Van Dyke also developed a new conviction while in Palestine, namely, “that Christianity is an out-of-doors religion” (Van Dyke 1908:xi). He rhetorically asked his readers, “How shall we understand [Christianity] unless we carry it under the free sky and interpret it in the companionship of nature?” (1908:xii). While in Jerusalem, Van Dyke experienced a silent understanding among his fellow travelers characterized by a sense that Christ’s crucifixion had actually occurred in the open air of the out-of-doors, rather than inside any of the buildings containing Eastern Orthodox shrines. Here, the out-of-doors became a shrine unto itself. Indeed, for many Protestant pilgrims the shrines of the Eastern churches were “intolerable” (Babcock 1902:82).

Like Fosdick, Dwight L. Moody eschewed civilization on his Holy Land tour in order to experience the land in a similar fashion to Christ. Moody insisted on walking whenever possible. Likewise, Henry Van Dyke refused to take a convenient train from Jaffa to Jerusalem, because he did not want his first glimpse of Jerusalem to be from a “car window” in a “mechanical way”; rather, he wanted to “take the old high road” (1908:25). Later in his pilgrimage, Van Dyke lamented the fact that God had ever suffered humanity to build the city with all of its idolatrous shrines.

This fear and disgust of Eastern worship and the love for the out-of-doors quickly turned into a call for missions among pilgrims to the misguided Eastern Christians. The idea that Christian identity was universal among believers and that it transcended any other cultural or regional commitment was pervasive among Gilded Age Protestants during the heyday of the American foreign mission enterprise. These ministers conflated Christianity and Western civilization in their writings, as many liberal proponents of missions would do during the Progressive era. According to William Hutchison, this mood included “convictions about the Adamic or Christlike innocence of the Americans, a national destiny made manifest in biblical prophecy, and America’s redemptive role within the divine plan” (Hutchison 1987:5). Thus, Protestant ministers’ views of the Armenians, Nestorians, and Copts of the Holy Land as “heathens” in need of true salvation must be understood within the context of the imperialistic American conceptions of national destiny guiding relations with cultures deemed primitive by the Western world.

Writing in this mood, Philip Schaff concluded his travel narrative with a call for missions to the misguided inhabitants of the East. He wrote: “Once Europe called upon Asia, ‘come over and help us!’ Now the same cry comes from Asia and Africa to Europe and America” (Schaff 1878:392). For Schaff, the lands of the Bible comprised a vast mission field. It must be “conquered with spiritual weapons for Christ and Christian civilization by the Western nations, in discharge of a debt of gratitude for the blessings received from them” (1878:391). Americans must not neglect the heathens inhabiting this landscape in the broader mission enterprise.

## CONCLUSION

When American Protestants saw the Holy Land in their imaginations at the turn of the century, they saw a particularly Christian view of the “mystery of the East” —



a baptized Orientalism. Protestants saw a potential future home for the Jews that would fulfill many of their religious expectations for the prophetic future. These expectations had been shaped in part by the prophecies of the Bible itself, as well as their popularized interpretation in premillennial dispensationalism. In addition, in the vision of many Protestants, the Arabs were primitive savages who were in need of the benevolent protection of their more civilized superiors. These perspectives fed into what would become a widely accepted belief in the early twentieth century—the idea that Ottoman Palestine was rightly a Jewish homeland.

Though American Catholics have largely continued to ignore Palestine in favor of pilgrimages to Rome, many Protestants have attempted to create a new form of biblicism, a fifth gospel, that adds to the revelation already present in the Bible through the analysis of material phenomena such as rocks, hills, and flowers. This analysis often echoed the commitments of romanticism by celebrating the presence of the divine in Nature.

Wide Protestant audiences in the United States anticipated travel narratives of Palestine, appreciating the unique confirmation of prophecy, faith, and religious experience that the Holy Land afforded their ministers. Such readers were able to make a vicarious pilgrimage through narratives provided by their ministers, who each created a somewhat personal Holy Land based upon subjective experience and shared views. Nevertheless, there were distinct commonalities in the Protestant Holy Land tour genre, exhibiting common traits of geopiety.

Some of the views that were shared by these figures were polarized. Arabs were either idealized as modern representations of biblical figures as they went about their lives, or condemned for their lack of civilization. In addition, the Holy Land was either over-civilized by the influence of Eastern Christians or excessively primitive due to its lack of technological advancement. The tension between the Protestant commitment to a religion of spirituality or heart rather than of place caused preachers to defend their idea of a holy site and of pilgrimage. Finally, the occurrence of deicide, or the death of Christ upon the land of Palestine and by its residents called its special holy nature into question and created a need for a prophetic interpretation of negative phenomena.

Protestant ministers brought home an interpretation of the Gospel as an “out-of-doors” phenomenon, connecting Jesus to the wind, sky, and flowers of the Holy Land. Because the Protestant treatment of Palestine as the Holy Land as promised to the Jews was popularized in American culture, Americans were all too ready to view the settlement of the Jews on Arab lands as a spiritual event rather than a political and colonialist one. As Palestine was presented to them,

most Protestants believed that it was in the best interest of the Arabs to be colonized by more civilized Jews, leading to widespread acceptance of Zionism among American Protestants for much of the twentieth century.

## REFERENCES

Ahlstrom, Sydney

1972 *A Religious History of the American People*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Babcock, Maltbie T.

1902 *Letters From Egypt and Palestine*. New York: Scribner.

Banks, Charles E.

1902 *Authorized and Authentic Life and Works of T. De Witt Talmage*. Microfiche.

Blackstone, W. E.

1892 "Jerusalem." *The Jewish Era*, vol. 1 No. 3, July 1892, ed. W. E. Blackstone.

1892 *Jesus is Coming*. Chicago: Fleming H. Revel.

Brooks, Phillips

1915 *Letters of Travel*. New York: E. P. Dutton.

Fosdick, Harry Emerson

1927 *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*. New York: Macmillan.

Holmes, John Haynes

1929 *Palestine Today and Tomorrow: A Gentiles Survey of Zionism*. New York: Macmillan.

Hutchison, William R.

1987 *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.



Leach, William

1993 *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture*. New York: Vintage.

Macartney, Clarence E.

1942 *Six Kings of the American Pulpit*. Philadelphia: Westminster.

Moody, J.

1905 *Recollections of Dwight L. Moody*. London: Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier.

Moody, Paul D.

1938 *My Father: An Intimate Portrait of Dwight Moody*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co.

Moody, William R.

1900 *Dwight L. Moody*. New York: Fleming H. Revell.

Robinson, Charles E.

1904 *Maltbie Davenport Babcock: A Reminiscent Sketch and Memorial*. New York: Fleming H. Revell.

Said, Edward

1978 *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.

Schaff, Philip

1878 *Through Bible Lands: Notes of Travel in Egypt, the Desert, and Palestine*. New York: American Tract Society.

Stone, John Timothy

1908 *Footsteps in a Parish: An Appreciation of Maltbie Davenport Babcock as a Pastor*. New York: Scribner.

Szasz, Ferenc.

1981 "T. DeWitt Talmage: Spiritual Tycoon of the Gilded Age." *The Journal of Presbyterian History* 59:18-32.

Talmage, T. DeWitt

1893 *From Manger to Throne: Embracing a New Life of Jesus the*

*Christ and A History of Palestine and its People Including an Account of the Author's Journey to, Through, and From the Christ-Land.* New York: The Christian Herald Bible House.

1912      *T. DeWitt Talmage as I Knew Him.* New York: E. P. Dutton.

Van Dyke, Henry

1908      *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land: Impressions of Travel in Mind, Body, and Spirit.* New York: Scribner.



## Looking Backward Again: The Future of Utopian Fiction

RANDY BUSH

IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE WHY EDWARD BELLAMY WROTE HIS NOVEL *Looking Backward*. It was the 1880s, a time when the wounds from the Civil War were slow in healing and the work of Reconstruction was far from progressive. A depression had staggered the nation in 1883. Labor riots, like the Chicago Haymarket Riot of 1886, were flaring up and casting the shadow of anarchy across the land. It was a time of disparity between the rich and the poor, perhaps no worse than today, yet more painfully visible as the poor traveled north searching for jobs and the immigrant poor landed on the eastern shores searching for new beginnings. In Bellamy's eyes, America resembled a huge stage-coach to which the masses of humanity were harnessed. The top occupants rode along in ease, enjoying a temperate breeze and good company. All the rest were required to help pull the coach, struggling over the rough and uneven roads, longing to unseat those of privilege and somehow attain their positions of comfort. Out of this setting emerged Bellamy's vision of a better world.

*Looking Backward* was composed as a volume intended to describe to an American audience on the eve of the twenty-first century the institutions and social realities that marked the end of the nineteenth century. Its fictional author is Julian West, who was thirty years old in 1887. West had difficulty sleeping, so a chance combination of a mesmerizer's trance and a basement-level, well-insulated sleeping chamber led to an extended slumber. He dozed off on May 30, 1887, and awoke in the year 2000, having slept 113 years, three months, and eleven days. On one level, the plot bears a strong resemblance to Washington Irving's short story "Rip van Winkle," composed about twenty-five years earlier. Rip van Winkle dozed off in the Catskill Mountains for twenty years, sleeping through the entire Revolutionary War and awakening to a new era of the American Union. But Bellamy's hero slept for over five times as long as Rip van

Winkle, and much more had changed in his world than simply a shift from George III to George Washington. West emerged into a society that had altered in philosophy and practice at every level imaginable.

West's first vision of his new environment is a panoramic view of modern Boston, miles of broad streets and large open squares filled with trees, statues, and fountains. West asks about the disappearance of rooftop chimneys, a change that had come about due to alternative forms of heat available in the year 2000. But within a few pages, Bellamy has his protagonist turn to weightier concerns and ask how the labor question has been resolved in this new age. Beginning then and carried on intermittently through the rest of the book is an exposition on socialism, egalitarianism, and economic reform. Bellamy imagined a world that no longer endured civil wars or the need for standing armies. He pictured a society that knew neither depression nor want. Workers did work they enjoyed and then retired at forty-five. With a hint of Calvinist skepticism, West suggests at one point that human nature must have changed drastically over the years. But his host, Dr. Leete, assures him that human nature has not altered; only the "conditions of human life have changed, and with them the motives of human action." (Bellamy 1917:45) The nation had become the sole employer in the land, protecting against capitalist excesses while ensuring that all received both responsibilities suited to their abilities and rewards commensurate with everyone else. The contrasts between the two ages are made as drastic as possible—a bleak, societal hell contrasted with a heavenly modern period of peace and social contentment.

As a citizen of the very time into which Bellamy has transported his hero, it is entertaining to consider his predictions in light of current realities. Given the present hullabaloo over when the new millennium begins, Bellamy is quite clear that the year 2000 is the eve of the twenty-first century. However, he makes nary a mention of Y2K or even computers for that matter, although he does include a chapter on the centralized records that detail every item of production and commerce passing through the national warehouses. The city of Boston today does have huge public buildings and beautiful parks, but Bellamy wrongly assumed that somehow that city's bizarre street configuration and traffic patterns would all have been fixed by now. He accurately predicts the development of household stereo systems and clock radios. He does describe in detail how each of us will have a personalized credit card, standardizing a system of wage deposits and purchase debits not far removed from what we have today. And having never heard of Sam Walton, Bellamy spoke prophetically of when the "great city bazar [sic] crushed its country rivals with branch stores, and in the city it-



self absorbed its smaller rivals till the business of a whole quarter was concentrated under one roof, with a hundred former proprietors of shops serving as clerks.” (Bellamy 1917:39)

But try as he does, Bellamy’s utopian vision is imperfect. There is a dark side lurking beneath the polished façades of this new era. It is not something openly acknowledged, but visible between the lines of the text, especially when they are read from our post-World War, post-fascism perspective. For example, the leadership of the country comes from a select pool of “department heads” who elect one of their own to be President. At the President’s right hand is the inspectorate, the officers who handle all complaints about official insolence and inefficiency. In fact, this group does not wait for complaints to be filed; rather, it is “on the alert to catch and sift every rumor of a fault in the service [and] to find out what is going wrong before anybody else does.” (Bellamy 1917:155) It calls to mind the ancient warning of Juvenal: *Sed quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* (Who shall guard the guards themselves?) Another example of the flaws in this vision is the fact that all workers who persistently refuse to perform in the best interest of the common good are sentenced to solitary imprisonment on bread and water until they amend their ways. The author tosses off this detail without further comment or speculation on how many people this policy affects and how long they are expected to endure this punishment.

In his 1917 introduction to the Modern Library edition of this book, Heywood Broun mentions the condescending remarks of many people about *Looking Backward*, noting their critique that it isn’t “first-rate economics.” (Bellamy 1917:vii) Maybe it isn’t. The book relies heavily on Marxist theory and socialist systems of centralized economies. It also mixes in a dose of Social Darwinism, that confidence in the natural perfectibility of the human species made popular in the late nineteenth century by Herbert Spencer. In light of the collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as the sad, continual progress we make in finding new ways to inflict hardships on one another, both the Marxist and Social Darwinist approaches must be considered less than “first-rate.”

Economic theory aside, *Looking Backward* also stumbles in three other areas. First, Bellamy was naïve about the perceived inexhaustibility of the earth’s natural resources and the notion that members of an ever-growing global population could have all their wants supplied indefinitely. Second, the countries that had achieved the heightened state of affairs Mr. West experienced in the year 2000 included America, “the great nations of Europe, as well as Australia, Mexico, and parts of South America.” (Bellamy 1917:111-2) All others are indirectly referred to as “backward races” in this new world order. Given the grow-

ing interconnection between nations in contemporary society, it seems impossible to imagine how Bellamy's program could function without being guilty of global economic injustice in relation to the so-called "backward" nations. Third, while a high value is placed on civility and working for the common good, Bellamy forgets that there is something in the human spirit that thrives on "otherness." He would have our vocations alone define how we differ from one another; but the diversity of human spirits, coupled with the universal need for creative self-expression, must inevitably revolt against any such homogeneity.

The saddest part, however, comes when fears over Bellamy's flawed economics and naïve utopian dreams about perfecting society succeed in keeping us from being touched by his heartfelt prose. One characterization used in this book to describe life in this modern period was that when it rained, the people used to put up 300,000 umbrellas over as many heads; but now, thanks to covered sidewalks, they put up one umbrella over all the heads. Later in the book, a clergyman named Barton gives a sermon in which he states what could be identified as the philosophical core of Bellamy's vision:

It was the sincere belief of even the best of men of that [prior] epoch that the only stable elements in human nature, on which a social system could be safely founded, were its worst propensities. They had been taught and believed that greed and self-seeking were all that held mankind together.... They believed—even those who longed to believe otherwise—the exact reverse of what seems to us self-evident; they believed, that is, that the anti-social qualities of men, and not their social qualities, were what furnished the cohesive force of society (Bellamy 1917:230).

There even comes a moment in the book when Julian West imagines himself back in the nineteenth century amid the squalor (by comparison) of his former life in Boston. Imagining himself once more in a world of war and threats of war, of poverty, crime, and rampant individualism, he struggles to speak prophetically to those around him: "They who will not learn to be helpers of one another are doomed to be beggars of one another from the least to the greatest!" (Bellamy 1917:257); and "If people eat with a spoon that leaks half its contents between bowl and lip, are they not likely to go hungry?" (258) As might be expected, his audience rejects his message. The tension is resolved only when West awakens from his nightmare and finds himself again in the congenial surroundings of Dr. Leete's home.

It is not difficult to understand why Edward Bellamy wrote his book or why he described the year 2000 in the manner he did. The desire to awaken from a



deep sleep to discover a world cured of all its social and economic ills, a world of peace and prosperity, is not unreasonable. What is difficult to understand is why the generations since Bellamy have so seldom attempted to write utopian visions like *Looking Backward*. Granted, describing utopian or ideal societies has not been a genre of fiction writing much visited over the ages. Plato laid the groundwork with his *Republic*, a model loosely emulated in the sixteenth century in Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, in the seventeenth century in Campanella's *Civitas Solis* and Bacon's *New Atlantis*, and in the mid-nineteenth century in Étienne Cabet's *Voyage en Icarie*. Bellamy's book appeared about forty-five years after Cabet's work and has been called one of the most influential books on social reform published in America.

But alongside any list of utopian works, there is a parallel list of anti-utopian, satirical writings. Preceding Bellamy are Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Butler's *Erewhon* (an anagram for "nowhere," which is the literal meaning of "utopia"). Following Bellamy are Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It seems clear that people are fascinated with the topic of utopian life. Bellamy's book alone sold over a million copies. But as quickly as one author pens a version of glorious future societies, another describes a nightmarish alternative world of the same future age. And since the 1950s, there has been relative silence on this topic of utopian visions; certainly nothing has appeared matching the influence *Looking Backward* had in its day.

Why are we hesitant to imagine or describe a society in which there is no poverty, war, or injustice? Are we converts to Dr. Pangloss's "metaphysico-theologocosmolonigology" and believe we already live in the best of all possible worlds? Or are we chronically cynical about the human condition, believing that which was attributed to us in the *Looking Backward* sermon, that our only stable human features are our worst qualities, not our best ones? Maybe we are more skeptical than cynical. We have seen too much in the years since World War II and the Holocaust to cling to any belief in an inevitably progressing human society. Or perhaps the cultural philosophies of hedonism and individualism, coupled with our post-McCarthyism fear of anything socialist, have neutered our ability even to consider a utopian, collective future.

Any one of those four options could well be true. Yet what saddens me is that this utopian reticence has not been challenged more by people of faith. Recent theologians have been hesitant to offer their visions of a radically transformed society, yet such was not always the case. Bellamy's nineteenth-century hopes for a brighter future are not so different from the aspirations of Walter Rauschenbusch and other Social Gospellers of the early twentieth century. A

fresh appropriation of the biblical image of the “kingdom of God” led the Social Gospel leaders to call for a renewed sense of social solidarity in our nation. The strong should stand up for the weak. Our love for God should lead us directly to love and serve others. The entire social order needed to be “Christianized,” remolded along the principles of equality and justice outlined in the Sermon on the Mount and the Great Commandments to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. The only ones approximating this theological position today are the liberation theologians. They call for radical changes by recognizing a preferential option for the poor and empowerment for the oppressed the world over. However, such social transformations require wresting power away from the powerful by revolutionary means. Bellamy himself had explicitly rejected the violence inherent in the Marxist political agenda and was at odds with all models of forceful change.

Interestingly, the group that currently comes closest to describing utopian agendas for the future is not the theological community but rather the science fiction community. Entire new societies, surpassing what Bellamy envisioned for Boston in the year 2000, fill the shelves of the science fiction sections of every bookstore. Yet, upon closer examination, a pattern becomes apparent. Most futuristic societies are built upon the ashes of our failed current society. Some horrific apocalypse (natural or human-made) destroys almost all of life, with a stalwart remnant managing to rebuild society while vowing not to repeat the mistakes of the past. Consider the cinematic versions of these premises, such as the *Planet of the Apes* series, the movies *Mad Max*, *The Postman*, or *Waterworld*. It could be argued that Gene Roddenberry’s *Star Trek* creation is a futuristic vision of relative peace in the universe that was achieved without cataclysmic upheavals. Yet the pivotal moment leading to the eventual generations of *Star Trek*’s Enterprise was not a theological or sociological insight. Rather, it was an event of “first contact,” when another species of life from the universe initiated contact with Earthlings. In this scenario, such contact forced human beings to rethink their flawed patterns of social behavior and begin re-imagining life in a universe that is shared instead of inhabited by them alone.

Predicting the future is always a difficult project. In a self-reflective encounter in *Looking Backward*, Julian West comments to his hosts that “one can look back a thousand years easier than forward fifty.” Perhaps in our hearts we believe that things will eventually work out for the best, but not in our lifetime, or our children’s or grandchildren’s lifetimes. An early reviewer of Bellamy’s book made precisely this point when he chided *Looking Backward* for suggesting that the first fruits of this wonderful new society would begin to be evident a mere



half-century into the future. The reviewer argued that it would be more believable to place this ideal state seventy-five centuries in the future. But of what use is such a timetable for progress, if it is so far extended into the future that it fails to give us any hope and confidence today?

Maybe we do not need to “look backward again,” to stand here on the brink of the twenty-first century and imagine a utopian future of our own. The pragmatic response would challenge us to focus on the concrete changes we can achieve now in order to improve our present-day quality of life. We should do what we can now to provide for the poor, the elderly, the disenfranchised and forgotten. Let’s not expend a lot of energy in pursuit of universal visions of “single umbrellas” unfolding over the cities of our world whenever the literal and social weather turns inclement. But what is sacrificed when this pragmatism takes over? What happens when we no longer dare to articulate imagined visions of what we long to see concretely? Do we not risk forgetting how even to speak the language of idealism and social justice? Will we find ourselves incapable of seeing progress, not as something that is incremental and elusive, but as something that can be broad, sweeping, and foundational?

Envisioning the future always requires an ability to see what is most durable in the world around us. Such lasting things are seldom mansions or monuments; recall Shelley’s “Ozymandias” with its inscribed statue crumbling into desert sand. Things that endure are usually invisible and impossible to measure. To paraphrase the apostle Paul, they are things of a faithful spirit, of a heart loving oneself enough to desire the best for others, and of a hopeful mind able to imagine a time and place without fear, suffering, and waste. Lasting change comes when we believe that it is the best in us that endures, not the worst. Yet even with all that, one thing more is needed—a willingness to break the Silence-of-Many-Names: the silence of apathy that believes nothing need be done if I am not being affected personally; the silence of cynicism that believes nothing can be done to change how things are; the silence of religious escapism that casts everything in terms of God’s timing and planned apocalypse, gazing vacantly into the heavens while ignoring the kingdom of God that is in our midst. Though their names and causes vary, the effects of these silences are the same. So to speak a word, any word, daring to imagine a better way to live on earth and in relation both to God and our neighbor, is to break the power of what currently keeps us in the chains of the status quo.

There will always be a place for utopian visions like Bellamy’s. Having reached the age he envisioned long ago, it is appropriate for us to repeat the exercise again and again and again. The world may well consider us to be only unrealistic “dream-

ers.” But, as Thoreau has said: “If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.” (Thoreau 324)

## REFERENCES

Bellamy, Edward

1917 *Looking Backward, 2000-1887*. New York: The Modern Library.

Thoreau, Henry D.

1971 *Walden*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.



*Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe. Volume 1: The Medieval Inheritance.* Edited by Bruce Gordon. St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History. Scholar Press/Ashgate, 1996, x and 194 pages.

This collection of essays in two volumes is devoted to a basic question which emerged from the 1993 meeting of the European Reformation Research Group: "how sixteenth-century Protestants used their sources to craft a historical perspective which could justify the break with the medieval church" (ix). The essays that sought to answer the question were then presented at their meeting in the following year. These became the core of the present two volumes. The volumes are divided "along a rough chronological line," and "the essays in the first volume explore the relationship between the Reformation and the medieval religious and intellectual culture" (ix). An introductory essay by the editor, Bruce Gordon, is reproduced in both volumes. It describes in detail that which is noted in the title. In other words, it highlights the connection between the shaping of Protestant identities and the various views of history. These various views buttressed the Protestant groups' claims that they were restoring faithfully the "pure church." At least since Eusebius, and arguably since the apostle Paul, the point of debate over the doctrine and life of the church has been the question of antiquity, of which claims could be established as faithful to "that which has been handed down." Lutheran, Zwinglian, and later English reformers all jostled with "old church believers" who charged the Reformation with innovation. Consequently, views of history and thus a new historiography were essential ingredients in the development of Protestant identities.

A brief review of select essays from the eleven in the first volume illustrates some of the ways the general theme is carried out. In "Protestant Self-Perception and the Problem of *Scandalum*: a Sketch," Beat Hodler addresses the theme from an ethical standpoint: how Protestant reformers responded to charges that Luther in particular and other reformers as well were guilty, through their virulent polemics, of the charge of breaking the bonds of love which held the church together. Some accepted the charge and responded that such scandal was unavoidable in a fallen world being addressed by truth; others rejected the charge and retorted that "the real scandal was the idolatrous rites of the Catholics" (26). In "Luther's Concept of History and the Formation of an Evangelical Identity," Markus Wriedt investigates the relationship of the issues in his title to "the process of building national and cultural identities" in early modern Europe. Starting with a view that medieval society viewed religion as a bond holding society

together, and that the Reformation destroyed that bond, Wriedt asks "to what extent Luther and his followers were aware of the destructive nature of their teaching" (32). He then goes on to show that Luther's concept of history was essentially Augustinian in its view of human history as salvation history, and humankind's role in that history as one of cooperation with God. A Lutheran identity was formed as Luther and his followers viewed themselves as God's instruments.

Several contributions treat similar themes in other traditions which arose out of the Protestant Reformation. They are "History, Ideology and Propaganda in the Reformation: the Early Writing 'Anklag und ernstliches ermanen Gottes' (1525) of Heinrich Bullinger" by Hans Ulrich Bächtold; "The Problem of Legitimacy and Precedent in English Protestantism, 1539-47" by Alec Ryrie; and "'Yet, from time to time there were men who protested against these evils': Anabaptism and Medieval Heresy" by Geoffrey Dipple. Bruce Gordon discusses "'This Worthy Witness of Christ': Protestant Uses of Savonarola in the Sixteenth Century." Julian Lock focuses on the ultimately unsuccessful quest in England to forge an agreed-upon genealogy which might show how the English monarchy had a historic role in the struggle "between Christ and Antichrist," in his essay "Plantagenets and the Papacy: Protestant England's Search for Royal Heroes."

Other essays focus on particular doctrinal and moral issues. In "The Debate over 'unwritten Verities' in Early Reformation England," Peter Marshall describes the counter-arguments to the Council of Trent's assertion of the authority of unwritten traditions and the challenges of maintaining a principle of *sola scriptura*. Emidio Campi focuses on particular doctrines espoused by an exiled Italian Protestant in his essay on "Bernardino Ochino's Christology and 'Mariology' in his Writings of the Italian Period (1532-42)." Helen Parish analyzes the English Reformation polemic against medieval abuses in doctrine and life associated with required priestly celibacy in her contribution, "'Beastly is their living and their doctrine': Celibacy and Theological Corruption in English Reformation Polemic."

The essays of this first volume reflect broad reading and insightful further questions. The essay by Wriedt, unfortunately, has numerous errors, mostly indicating lack of care probably on the part of the translators and editor. As a whole the collection addresses well a fascinating theme which is important for understanding the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation as a vital period in the history of the church and society.

—JOHN ARTHUR MAXFIELD  
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



*Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe. Volume 2: The Later Reformation.* Edited by Bruce Gordon. St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History. Scholar Press/Ashgate, 1996, x and 202 pages.

The authors of the ten essays in the second volume of *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe* paint a rich picture of Protestant identity formation across six distinct communities. The common theme from the first volume is again underscored: "how sixteenth-century Protestants used their sources to craft a historical perspective which could justify the break with the medieval church" (ix). Two main concerns predominate: the formation of history and of identity. Yet, the first few essays of the collection make it clear that even the writing of history was directed toward the more pressing goal of shaping a community's identity. Identity formation thus stands at the foreground. This formation is examined not only across distinct communities ranging from Calvin's Geneva to late sixteenth-century Ireland, but also across the variety of channels by which identity formation can occur, history being accorded a privileged position among these.

This second volume covers the period in which Protestantism had become more established. The authors include Bruce Gordon, William G. Naphy, David Watson, Andrew Pettegree, Christopher Bradshaw, Paul Regan, Ute Lotz-Heumann, Pamela Biel, Bodo Nischan, and Howard Hotson. They represent scholars from within the Anglo-Saxon historical tradition as well as scholars speaking from the European continental perspective. They write about the Reformation communities of Geneva, France, Holland, England, Ireland, and Germany, revealing the impact of each community's particular socio-political situation on historical writing and identity-formation. A wide variety of identity formation channels are also explored. Historical writing predominates as one of these channels; however, several essays also focus on the use of biblical analogies such as Old Testament kings and the nation of Israel. The changing nature of social institutions is also considered, as in Pamela Biel's essay on betrothal. Additionally, the importance of ritual is examined not only in the making of a Protestant identity in opposition to a Roman Catholic one, but also in the formation of confessional identities among the Reformed and Lutheran communities of late Reformation Germany.

Amidst this diversity, of particular note are those essays that deal with a particular type of historical writing, namely martyrology. David Watson's essay "Jean Crespin and the Writing of History in the French Reformation" looks at *Livre des*

*Martyrs*, a history of French Reformation martyrs written by Crespin after he had fled to Geneva. Historiographical concerns predominate in Watson's essay, with the clear aim of elucidating the identity forming role of historical writing. Watson explains that Jean Crespin explicitly aims to faithfully reproduce the events that he reports. That he indeed attempted to do so is clear from the starkly uneven length in his accounts of different martyrdoms, likely due to the disparity in the information he had at hand. However, Watson is quick to point out the pedagogical purpose in Crespin's writing of history and the consequent likelihood that he tampered with his historical sources. The inclusion of lengthy and recognizable statements of faith, supposedly spoken from the mouths of the condemned martyrs, are for Watson an indication that Jean Crespin has added to his reports for the benefit of his audience. As a consequence, he cautions contemporary historians to be critical in drawing on Crespin's work as a historically accurate source. He also uses such caution to look more closely at the purpose of Jean Crespin's writing. Watson finds that historical accuracy is indeed overshadowed by Crespin's strong pedagogical concern. For the purpose of encouraging the Protestant communities of France and Geneva in the face of the persecutions in France, the *Livre des Martyrs* was an exceptional work. Watson thus encourages us to read this sixteenth-century work both critically and with an appreciation of Crespin's intention to buttress the identity of his community.

Watson's essay is a clear example of how historical writing was directed towards shaping the identity of a community. This essay then takes on an even richer significance when compared with Andrew Pettegree's essay "Adriaan van Haemstede: the Heretic as Historian," a look at another Reformation martyrology in a Dutch community. Because Haemstede's community and Haemstede himself were directly involved in persecutions, his martyrology takes on a different shape from that of Jean Crespin. Two aspects of Haemstede's situation are critical. First, he had little time to gather faithful renditions of the events concerning the martyrs. Second, he had even greater incentive to shape his martyrologies for pedagogical purposes. The pressures of persecution weighed on him heavily and personally. Pettegree draws on these two characteristics of Haemstede's Dutch Calvinist context. He then points out the clarity of Haemstede's historical vision, the large amount of source material being omitted, and the narrative craft by which Haemstede weaves the story of his persecuted community into the epic of suffering of the sainted martyrs throughout church history. In these two martyrologies the concern for identity formation and the manner of writing history are inextricably connected, as Andrew Pettegree and David Watson are keen to point out.



Other authors in this collection also take into serious consideration the specific socio-political context of each Reformation community. The strength of many of these essays resides in the fact that such consideration of context is carried even into historiographical analysis of the very sources used. The manner in which and purpose for which the histories were written are examined closely. As a result, the authors avoid anachronistic readings of these sources as essentially historically accurate documents. Most importantly, their examination of the manner in which their sources were written, in addition to the contents that these sources provide, adds a richness to the picture they present of these sixteenth-century communities. Though some essays suffer from a degree of disorganization, perhaps due to the preliminary stage of much of the research, I highly recommend this collection both to those well versed in the Reformation period as well as those less familiar with this area of scholarship.

—ARIANE ARPELS-JOSIAH  
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*Go Preach! Mark's Kingdom Message and the Black Church Today.* By Brian K. Blount. Orbis Books, 1998, xiii and 290 pages.

In this book Brian Blount offers an interpretation of the Third Gospel that remains faithful to the author's own context while at the same time drawing significant connections between Mark's story and today's African-American church. Blount's reading is based on the idea that Mark's "kingdom of God" image symbolizes an "interventionist pre-understanding" that is unique to Israel. Mark's own interpretation of this traditional image, however, does not align itself with the expectation of a revolutionary Messiah who leads God's troops in a violent overthrow of Rome. Rather, Mark sees God's "kingdom way" represented in Jesus' "preaching way." By "preaching" Blount does not mean mere oral proclamation but the multi-faceted ministry of Jesus that *transgresses boundaries* (social, economic, political, legal, ethnic, cultic, etc). This means that the preaching ministry of Mark's Jesus, according to Blount, represents God's own invading kingdom. In its defiant crossing of boundaries it is "a present pocket of [God's] future resistive power." It is precisely to this preaching ministry that Mark calls his readers, both past and present. Thus Blount can say that Mark calls the African-American church to "Go Preach!"

After introducing this multi-layered thesis (chapter 1) and then placing it in the context of modern biblical scholarship's continued attempts to define the

kingdom of God (chapter 2), Blount turns to a discussion of his method (chapter 3). His interpretation of Mark is informed by socio-linguistic theory, which holds that language does not convey meaning but “meaning potential.” This potential, Blount explains, is accessed contextually from two angles, from that of the ancient and modern audiences. Methodologically, Blount is largely indebted to the work of M. A. K. Halliday, who argues that language consists of signs whose potential for meaning is actualized only in the context of cultural systems. The result of this understanding of language is that, in the process of interpretation, the context that produced a written text must be understood before one can understand the text itself. Blount’s adaptation of Halliday’s work includes the significant addition of Rudolf Bultmann’s variables for “contextual influence,” thus enabling him to bring the present context of the African-American church to bear on his overall interpretation.

With this socio-linguistic approach, Blount reconstructs a religiously and politically charged Markan context. He sees Mark’s “social location” lying amid what Ched Myers calls a “war of apocalyptic myths” (chapter 4). This war is waged between Jewish Zealots on the one hand (seeking the reconstitution of Israel through a military uprising against Rome) and the provisional Jewish leadership on the other hand (seeking the reestablishment of institutional Israel through either accommodation or force). Both sides offer competing Jewish visions of Israel’s future in the face of Roman occupation, drawing from the same apocalyptic-interventionist imagery to further their cause. Mark’s story of Jesus, according to Blount, represents yet another side in this war of myths, a vision of God’s future kingdom that is not nationalistic but *inclusive*. This leads Blount to conclude that Mark’s original audience was most likely the marginalized, those who stood outside of the boundaries that Jesus was crossing.

When turning to the cultural-historical context (chapter 5), Blount argues that Mark assumes a Isaian-interventionist perspective, a brand of apocalypticism that operates within the human realm. It is a view characteristic of second temple Judaism (in which God intervenes to effect a this-worldly transformation) and yet uniquely Markan, for the “birth pangs” of the age to come are here represented by the suffering that results from a faithful response to Jesus. For Blount, then, Mark espouses an eschatological dualism whereby the present world is seen as redeemable, and he presents this particular perspective as a challenge to the socio-political order of his day.

The next seven chapters of Blount’s book (6-12) constitute a more detailed exegesis of those passages in Mark that contain references to the kingdom of



God. Those references are Mk 1:14-15 (the introduction to Jesus' ministry as preaching the kingdom of God), Mk 3:23-24 (the dismantling of Satan's kingdom by God's kingdom), Mk 4:11 (Jesus' teaching on the mystery of the kingdom in the sower parable), Mk 9:1 (Jesus' inclusion of the disciples in his kingdom ministry), Mk 11:10 (the movement of God's kingdom into Jerusalem), Mk 14:25 (the association of Jesus' kingdom preaching with the Passover tradition), and Mk 15:43 (the final call to preach and not just await the kingdom). Blount's exposition is sensitive to the overall literary contexts in which these verses appear, with each chapter drawing from the social and historical contexts that he has already reconstructed. What emerges is a reading that covers almost the entirety of Mark's story and an interpretation that is consistently faithful to the book's overall thesis. With each chapter a new layer is added to Blount's picture of Jesus as one proclaiming and forming an inclusive, boundary-breaking kingdom.

It is not until the final chapters of his book (13-16) that Blount's interpretation of Mark comes to bear directly upon the current situation of the African-American church. Blount rejects what he calls the "correspondence of terms" interpretive model whereby Jesus and his own political context are assumed to correspond, in a precise analogy, to the church and its own political context. Blount sees this model as a naïve attempt to bridge a social and historical chasm that cannot be crossed. He adopts instead the "correspondence of relationships" model of Christopher Rowland and Mark Corner. In their view, modern interpreters model the way in which they interpret their own contexts after the way in which ancient writers interpreted theirs. For Blount this means that the African-American church can (and should) interpret its current situation as Mark did his own. In other words, it must adopt Mark's interventionist view of Jesus' kingdom ministry to break the boundaries that colonial oppression, with its racist dynamics, has erected. It is in these final chapters that one feels the real power behind Blount's book as he interprets, not only the story of Mark, but the story of the African-American church as well. The result is an impressive correspondence between two very specific Christian contexts, yet an overall interpretation that is applicable to all.

—I. BRENT DRIGGERS  
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*An Ethics of Remembering*. By Edith Wyschogrod. University of Chicago Press, 1998, 280 pages.

In a time in which the term “Postmodern” has come to be used so carelessly and signify so little, Edith Wyschogrod’s erudite book, *An Ethics of Remembering*, gives a refreshing glimpse of the *différance* that a truly Postmodern perspective can provide. Wyschogrod is a well respected philosopher in her own right, with an entrenched Levinasian shape to her work, but also drawing heavily upon Derrida, Baudrillard, and other Continental (and some Anglo-American) Postmodern thinkers. In a similar way to John Caputo’s *Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*, Wyschogrod seeks to combine the deconstruction of Derrida with the ethical intimations of Levinas to think through ethical and religious questions. As she does this, Wyschogrod pulls together themes from her large corpus of published work, which includes reflection on questions such as how one should (and should not) configure events of mass death like the Holocaust, how one should appropriate Levinas’ ethics, and a tireless concern for the ethical and epistemological dimensions of letting the voice of the “other” break into one’s immanent world.

The project of *An Ethics of Remembering* is to think through the ethics and epistemology of historiography from a Postmodern perspective. Epistemologically, Wyschogrod struggles with how the historian can claim to tell the “truth” about the past when the past cannot speak: since language is not reliably representational, attempts to mirror the past are always, technically, distortions. Ethically, the historian senses an obligation for the dead other to speak and protest against the past injustice. But the ethical historian, in love with the dead other, is a “spurned lover” (xi) whose passion can never be reciprocated. The other cannot speak, yet the other cries out to speak.

Wyschogrod develops these ideas by carrying these concerns through discussion of a broad range of issues relating to history and historiography. For example, she engages Roland Barthes on photography, Baudrillard on virtual reality, Daniel Dennett and Roger Penrose on the historiographic implications of brain research, and Sartre on the foundations of community. The variety and scope of thinkers and disciplines discussed is remarkable. Through each of these discussions, she weaves the “thread” of her ethical and epistemological problem: how can a historian be faithful to the ethical obligation of speaking for the dead other, when that kind of resurrection of the voices of history is simply impossible?



Constructively, one of Wyschogrod's main contributions is in configuring how the events of mass death in the twentieth century provide a standpoint from which historians can function. For Wyschogrod, events like the Holocaust are "the entry of nihil into time" (xiii), which must provide the definitive orienting space for historians, no matter what period of history they study. As such, the "cataclysm" as she calls it, seems to function as a supremely sacred "object": this mysterious chasm which cannot be named nevertheless makes demands on historians to speak for those who had no voice.

As Wyschogrod develops "cataclysm" as the most significant ethical force for the historian, a cluster of questions might arise for readers: on what grounds are twentieth-century events of mass annihilation rendered qualitatively different than the horrors of other centuries? Wyschogrod is clear that "cataclysm" is not the problem of evil, or mass death in general, but of twentieth-century events of mass death. Out of all possible ethical and religious mysteries one could orient oneself toward, why choose "cataclysm?" In response to these types of questions, readers will sense the Postmodern nature of Wyschogrod's book: she refuses to present arguments which counter even quite basic objections, because she feels that there is no "neutral" place of reasoning to go in order to persuade a person of her point of view. She will speak her voice in all of its distinctiveness, and if the readers are changed by their encounter with her alterior voice, then so be it. She cannot force such an encounter through presenting arguments that are in general accessible to reason.

With this anti-rationalist tendency, Wyschogrod's work transgresses traditional polarizations, such as description and prescription, opinion and fact, claim and argument. While she gives close readings to the texts she discusses, she does not give "disinterested" but distinctively "interested" readings. This methodological practice is consonant with her configuration of the historian who is ethical; i.e., one who "reads" history with an eye for the present social function of that history. Thinking about the past cannot be separated from thinking about how to build a community of welcome rather than hostility. In the same organic rather than dichotomized way, Wyschogrod refuses to "extract" the "neutral reasons" from her account to give defense to her alterior voice. These characteristics of *An Ethics of Remembering* may frustrate some readers. Wyschogrod does not seek to give "hard reasons" for her position. Yet, in this move, Wyschogrod also shows some distinctive features of Postmodern discourse.

Bringing a Postmodern perspective to bear on a wide array of ethical and epistemological issues in historiography, *An Ethics of Remembering* is a signifi-

cant contribution to a variety of disciplines. Unfortunately Wyschogrod is not effective at writing for a broad, educated audience. Her text is filled with technical philosophical language and will require both a substantial amount of patience and a good reference work in philosophy for a non-specialist to read.

For students of religion and theology in particular, *An Ethics of Remembering* is significant in several regards. Wyschogrod herself is Jewish and has published on Jewish religion and ethics. This may inform her adamant concern that history must influence life. As Elie Wiesel emphasizes, memory is central to a distinctively Jewish consciousness. This presents special problems when one considers the possibility of remembering events like the Holocaust. While it is striking that the “cataclysm” rather than the Exodus provides the supreme orienting event for Wyschogrod, she does provide philosophical and historiographic resources which might inform a Postmodern “remembering of the Exodus,” or a Postmodern “remembering” of the Christian story. As such, although Wyschogrod rarely broaches traditional religious topics, her book could nevertheless function as an important dialogue partner for those interested in a distinctively Postmodern approach to religious issues.

—TODD BILLINGS

FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses.* By Richard Bauckham. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 93. Brill, 1998, xvi and 430 pages.

From an existential perspective, the meaning of death constitutes one of the most significant questions in the history of religions. This is especially the case in the vibrant tradition of Jewish and Christian apocalypses which flourished throughout the Second Temple period and continued to do so in a variety of forms into the fourth and fifth centuries C.E. Spectacular visions of the afterlife, tours of heaven and hell, and the restoration of Paradise are frequent apocalyptic expressions of God’s power over life and death, as well as the extension of divine punishment and reward beyond the grave. The fascinating diversity of these expressions, as well as their occasional esotericism, require special attention from critical scholarship.

The recent contribution of R. Bauckham to the study of this topic, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, stands as the culmination of fifteen years of critical research into the phenomenon of death, life, judgment, and reward in apocalyptic literature. The book is a collection of four-



teen essays, five of which are entirely new contributions. The others have been published elsewhere (1990-95), but are organized here in a single volume. The concept of “personal eschatology,” a term by which scholars designate “the future of individuals beyond death,” provides the unitive focus for this collection. By using the term “personal eschatology,” Bauckham does not exclude the significance of cosmic and historical expressions of eschatology in apocalyptic literature, but chooses rather to focus on literary expressions in which the primary concern of apocalyptic is the fate of individuals in the world to come. In comparison with other works which intersect with this research, as those of E. Puech (*La croyance*) and M. Himmelfarb (*Ascents to Heaven; Tours of Hell*), Bauckham concentrates specifically upon later Christian apocalypses, and it is in this area of research that his five new contributions emerge.

“The Tongue Set on Fire by Hell (James 3:6)” provides new readings of James in specific relation to its reference to “Gehenna,” its understanding of eschatological judgment, and the historical relationship between apocalyptic and wisdom to which James attests. “Augustine, the ‘Compassionate Christians,’ and the Apocalypse of Peter,” treats Augustine’s theological conflicts concerning judgment and mercy in light of the Apocalypse of Peter’s assertion that God will grant to the saints any of the damned for whom they will intercede. “Second Peter and the Apocalypse of Peter” establishes a new basis for consideration of the literary relationship between these two works, based especially upon previously neglected consideration of the Ethiopic text of Apocalypse of Peter. The final two essays of the collection are among the most significant in the volume and provide programmatic consideration of “The Four Apocalypses of the Virgin Mary” and “The Ascension of Isaiah: Genre, Unity and Date”—two apocalyptic traditions which attest fascinating reflection upon the fate of the dead in late antiquity. This, however, is not to discount the significance of Bauckham’s previously published work on descents to the underworld, early Jewish visions of hell, tensions between mercy and judgment in apocalyptic, resurrection as giving back the dead, and the rich man and Lazarus—all published together in this volume. One could only hope for a concluding essay to the volume, which might provide a more synthetic summary or typology for the consideration of personal eschatology illustrated in the individual essays.

One of the most consistent insights which emerges from Bauckham’s book is the relationship between the later Christian apocalypses and the writings of the canonical New Testament. A typical practice in the study of New Testament apocalyptic has been to investigate its relationship to authentically Jewish apocalypses (e.g., *1 Enoch*, *Daniel*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, etc.). The method employed

in Bauckham's essays reveals the critical insights which can be achieved by including the later Christian apocalypses in the continuing conversation concerning apocalyptic eschatology. Furthermore, Bauckham's essays attest to the relationship between the later Christian apocalypses and Christian theological polemics in patristic literature, including special attention to Irenaeus, Justin, Origen, Tertullian, and Augustine. This special emphasis portrays the apocalypses as participants in the broader realm of Christian apologetic and polemic well into the fifth century C.E. Finally, the importance of apocalyptic tours of heaven and hell, and especially their underlying theological assumptions, will remain obvious for students of Dante and Milton. The book thus intersects with numerous dimensions of historical, theological, and literary study.

E. P. Sanders (*Judaism: Practice and Belief*) has identified reward and punishment, as well as future hope, as among the common elements of Jewish theology from 63 B.C.E.-66 C.E.; yet he also notes the "vague" and undifferentiated nature of future hope and the afterlife during this period. Specific attention to the concrete and detailed depiction of future hope, punishment and reward in the apocalypses is thus necessary to provide clarity amid the "vagueness." The detailed studies undertaken by R. Bauckham, and carefully edited by Brill with comprehensive indices, shed new rays of discovery onto the complex horizons of apocalyptic hopes beyond the grave.

—CASEY DERYL ELLEDGE  
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen.* By Ernest W. Nicholson. Oxford University Press, 1998, vi and 268 pages.

Advanced students in all fields of study need in-depth introductions and surveys that provide the reader with a grasp of a discipline's history and present state. Ernest Nicholson's *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century* is such a work, providing a re-evaluation of the "Documentary Theory" of the Pentateuch in light of the vast literature that has appeared since the theory's most persuasive presentation by Julius Wellhausen. Nicholson's audience is the advanced student and Old Testament scholar; he informs the reader at the outset that his work is not intended as a "neutral state of the art." Rather, the work proceeds with the following premise: "The work of Wellhausen, for all that



needs revision and development in detail, remains the securest basis for understanding the Pentateuch" (vi).

Nicholson's book is divided into two parts with three chapters in part I (3-92) and six chapters in part II (95-268). Part I describes Pentateuchal studies from Wellhausen to Martin Noth. This section reviews familiar material, but it is a very good, detailed overview, and it sets a necessary framework for Nicholson's discussion in part II of newer approaches since the early 1970s.

Part II is a review and analysis of recent Pentateuchal compositional theories that are proposed as alternatives to the prevailing Documentary Theory. Nicholson outlines four theoretical paradigms to account for the literary complexity of the Pentateuch, focusing especially on what he calls "the Pre-P Tetracheuch," that is, the books of Genesis-Numbers before the addition and redaction of D and P (JE). The two traditional paradigms are: (1) The originally independent source narratives of J, E, and D are combined in the composition of the Pentateuch and these sources continue beyond the Pentateuch into Joshua, creating a Hexateuch. This was the general position of Wellhausen. (2) Deuteronomy and the Former Prophets are a continuous theological narrative redacted and composed by an exilic historian whose work presupposes the existence of a JE narrative. This is Noth's Deuteronomistic History (DtrH). Two recent alternative paradigms are: (3) There was never an independent, Pre-P Tetracheuch (JE) before the composition of DtrH. Rather, the Pre-P Tetracheuch was composed after and as a prologue to DtrH. (4) The Pre-P Tetracheuch is the creation of a Deuteronomic redactor (DtrR) who combined originally independent tradition complexes into a sequential narrative from the ancestral period to the time of the settlement.

The fourth paradigm is the position of Rolf Rendtorff. Rendtorff argues for a thorough form-critical approach that is divorced from the assumptions of source criticism. Instead of continuous narratives as the source material for the composition of the Tetracheuch, Rendtorff posits separate narrative complexes of independent traditions, gradually united to create larger complexes, and these larger complexes were only united at the final stage of Pentateuchal composition. Rendtorff's position is taken up and modified by his former student, Erhard Blum. Blum proposes two stages of Pentateuchal composition: (1) the Pre-P Tetracheuch is the composition of a DtrR in the post-exilic period, and (2) this composition subsequently underwent a Priestly redaction. Blum thus combines form-critical aspects of the fourth paradigm with compositional, post-DtrH aspects of the third paradigm. Nicholson considers Blum's work the most comprehensive in recent years.

He also sees Blum's position as a mediating position between traditional paradigms and recent proposals, avoiding many of the pitfalls of other recent positions by positing a large amount of pre-exilic material and by allowing the existence of continuous source narratives.

Moving from the composition of the Pre-P Tetrateuch, Nicholson addresses two issues regarding the documentary source P: (a) is P a continuous narrative and (b) is there evidence for dating P to the pre-exilic period? Regarding the first question, F. M. Cross has argued that the absence of distinctive P material paralleling JE's narrative points away from the view that P was an originally independent narrative. Instead, Cross describes P's redaction as a systematizing expansion of the normative JE material. Blum builds on the observations of Cross, but describes P as compositional instead of redactional to account for those narrative sections attributed to P that are usually seen as evidence of a continuous narrative.

Regarding the question of P's date, Nicholson surveys the views of M. Weinfeld, M. Haran and A. Hurvitz, who argue for dating P to the pre-exilic period. The possible pre-exilic dating of P is argued on the grounds that passages in Deuteronomy presuppose a knowledge of P, that certain legal aspects of P already exist in pre-exilic times, that P material existed but was isolated in pre-exilic times until the time of Ezra, and that the language of P is pre-exilic in contrast to the later Hebrew of Ezekiel and Chronicles. In response to these observations, Nicholson states, "Dating the composition of P to the late exilic or early post-exilic period, however, does not mean that its authors spun it out of thin air. That they took up traditions and cultic ordinances from earlier times need not be questioned." (219).

In his positive restatement of the Documentary Theory, Nicholson takes up the critique that the theory is too complex and unparalleled in ancient texts. As an answer to this critique, Nicholson cites the edited work of Jeffrey Tigay, in which examples of ancient texts are given where similar kinds of redaction and conflation occur. Restating the criteria for source identification, Nicholson cautiously states that none of the criteria is sufficient if taken alone, but that the case is a cumulative one with stylistic features playing only a supportive role to the more important criteria of divine names, and the presence of duplicative narratives that cannot be harmonized.

In his final chapter, Nicholson acknowledges the inadequacy of approaches that do not endeavor to interpret the final form of the Pentateuch, but he argues that it is the opposite error for synchronic approaches to devalue diachronic research. Nicholson cites the canonical approach of Brevard Childs as one ex-



ample of a method that attempts to take account of both aspects, but he has reservations concerning Childs' view that the canonical shaping of the Pentateuch provides the hermeneutical guide for theological exegesis. Nicholson wants to maintain the value of originally discrete stories as instances of "disclosure" within the life of the community of faith.

Nicholson's work is a comprehensive discussion of recent Pentateuchal approaches, making accessible an array of untranslated German works. In this comprehensive overview, however, there are places where Nicholson does not give full attention to scholarly views that he proposes to discuss. For example, at one point Nicholson proposes to take up the views of M. Rose, but he digresses into a discussion of J. Van Seters' views and he never returns to a full description of Rose's arguments (174-81). More importantly, a weakness in Nicholson's re-articulation of the Documentary Theory's dating of sources may be his uncharacteristically brief discussion of the work of Avi Hurvitz (220). Nicholson gives the impression that Hurvitz has been sufficiently answered by Robert Polzin, but this is not the case since much of Hurvitz's work postdates and responds to Polzin's conclusions. Lastly, Nicholson's presentation of the state of the field raises questions for this reviewer concerning scholarly enculturation with the predominance of certain theories in particular scholarly contexts. These points notwithstanding, Nicholson's work is possibly the best overview available for an in-depth discussion of Pentateuchal studies.

—JOSEPH F. SCRIVNER

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*Christians in Asia Before 1500*. By Ian Gillman and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit. The University of Michigan Press, 1999, xiv and 391 pages.

Few westerners have any substantial knowledge of the history of Christianity in Asia before the era of western Christian missions began in the sixteenth century. Because of this, the authors of *Christians in Asia Before 1500* sought to present their subject on its own terms. By and large, they succeeded admirably in their task. On the one hand, the book describes how Christianity took on a different character as it developed in each of its various Asian host cultures. On the other hand, the work demonstrates how, despite charges of heresy and syncretism from Christians of Europe, Asian Christians on the whole remained true to the faith that, after all, originated in western Asia. In other words, the charges of heresy and syncretism reveal more about the arrogance, dogmatism, and prejudice of western Christians (who are still arguing about who is truly ortho-

dox) than about the nature of Asian Christianity, which is the main subject of this volume.

The core of the book is found in chapters 4 through 10 which cover, respectively, “Christians in Syria and Palestine,” “Christians in ‘Arabia,’” “Christians in Armenia and Georgia,” “Christians in Persia (Iran)” “Christians in India,” “Christians in Central Asia,” and “Christians in China.” Chapters 11 and 12 are brief, the one dealing with “Christians in South-East Asia” and the last one a “Conclusion.” The first three chapters are given over to an “Introduction,” to a discussion of “Apostolic Times and Apostolic Traditions,” and to “A Necessary Excursus into Theology.” Helpful tools at the end of the work include a “General Chronological Chart” that provides parallel chronologies for Christianity in various parts of Asia; a chronology of the Church of the East in Iran; a 17-page bibliography; and an 11-page index. Sixteen pages of black-and-white photographic plates, of which more will be said below, are inserted in the middle of the volume.

Ian Gillman, retired from the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Queensland, was principally responsible for this project. However, several chapters on Central Asia and China, approximately a third of the book, were authored by Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, who until his recent untimely death was Professor of History of Religions at Bonn University. The dual authorship does not detract from the readability of the book, though differences in style and historiography are noticeable. In particular, Gillman writes with an ease characteristic of a native English speaker, although Klimkeit’s writing is certainly lucid and very comprehensible. Also Gillman, in citations of significant length, tends to quote secondary sources, whereas Klimkeit prefers giving the reader samplings of primary sources. For the tastes of this reviewer, the latter was decidedly more appealing.

Those interested in the history of Christianity in Asia know that the work under review was preceded by Samuel H. Moffett’s groundbreaking *A History of Christianity in Asia, Volume I: Beginnings to 1500*, which appeared in 1992. The two works, which are comparable in scope and length, therefore invite comparison. One immediately noticeable difference between the volumes is that while Moffett’s work is arranged chronologically, that of Gillman and Klimkeit is arranged geographically and culturally. Moffett is a scholar from the school of mission history which was established by Kenneth Scott Latourette in the first half of the twentieth century at Yale Divinity School. Latourette saw Christianity as a religion that waxes and wanes over time, with its gains during periods of expansion outweighing its losses during times of contraction. In this view of



the history of worldwide Christianity (a history which no one since Latourette has yet written) *chronos*, or more correctly the God working in *chronos*, governs the destiny of the Christian faith. Gillman and Klimkeit have taken a different approach to history, and given priority to *topos* over *chronos*. In their view of Christian history, locality, especially local culture, is seen to be more determinative of the course and development of Christianity than time. What is important for Gillman and Klimkeit is not how long and how strongly Christianity has been (or not been) represented in any part of the world, but its particular manifestations as it has taken root, grown, flourished and died in a given geographical and cultural area.

The difference in historiography makes for different emphases in the two books. To begin with, Gillman and Klimkeit are very interested in Asian Christian culture: the organization of the church in a particular region, its interactions with other regional religions, its distinctive theology, its art and artifacts. Thus the 36 photographic plates in the book are not ancillary to the project. The photographs develop the basic argument of the book, which is that Christianity (in Asia but also elsewhere) must be seen in its specific locality and societal context in order to be properly understood. Moffett's interest is in the development of story, of how events were linked or may have been linked in some sort of historical progression. This aspect of story, of teleological purpose, is missing in Gillman and Klimkeit's work.

Second, there is a difference in approach to non-western theology. Moffett is concerned about deviations of Asian Christian theology from doctrine propounded in the early Church's (Greek) councils, as the political changes time wrought separated the churches in Asia from those in the Roman Empire. Gillman and Klimkeit, on the other hand, are much more ready to interpret the results of those early Church councils as manifestations of a peculiar Greco-Roman Christianity, topographically and culturally restricted to Europe, and to see how Asian Christianity set its own criteria for faithfulness to the apostolic tradition. These criteria tended to be concerned much more with orthopraxy (right conduct in worship and society) than with orthodoxy (right thinking).

Third, whereas Moffett's chronological approach emphasizes how Asian Christianity moved away from its European counterpart, Gillman and Klimkeit show how the geography of Eurasia made Christian contacts between various communions possible throughout the centuries, in spite of the incredible difficulties posed by topography, war, ecclesial and national politics, culture, and language. Geography not only separates people from one another; it also provides bridges and channels of communication between them. Because of the different emphases

and perspective of Moffett on the one hand, and Gillman and Klimkeit on the other, the two books complement each other in a rather nice way.

In short, the volume by Gillman and Klimkeit is a welcome and very important addition to the growing literature on worldwide Christianity and its various interactions with other world religions. Specialists will no doubt quibble over certain points in the book. However, both the specialist and the general reader will appreciate the way in which the authors reveal the powerful and significant Asian incarnations of what was once erroneously believed to be the religion of the West.

—ARUN W. JONES

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*Mission and Catechesis: Alexandre de Rhodes & Inculturation in Seventeenth-Century Vietnam.* By Peter C. Phan. Orbis Books, 1998, xxiii and 324 pages.

Those who study and teach sixteenth and seventeenth century missions in Asia generally focus on Francis Xavier, Matteo Ricci, and Roberto de Nobili. Certainly the legendary exploits of these three Jesuits deserve much attention, but with the publication of *Mission and Catechesis*, Peter Phan has effectively inserted another figure into this trinity: French Jesuit Alexandre de Rhodes.

De Rhodes was born in Avignon, France, in 1593. He joined the Jesuits in 1612 and was educated by them in Rome. He was initially assigned to missions in Japan, and departed Lisbon for Macao in 1619. On the way he spent several years in India before finally reaching the port on the coast of China in 1623. Meanwhile Japanese rulers had begun persecuting Christians and the Jesuits turned their attention towards countries like Vietnam. From 1624 until his final expulsion in 1645, de Rhodes completed several mission trips in Tonkin (what is now Northern Vietnam) and Cochinchina (Central Vietnam). After surviving deportation and death sentences from the Vietnamese and demotion from the Jesuits, de Rhodes was sent back to Rome and then commissioned for service in Isfahan, Persia, where he died in 1660.

*Mission and Catechesis* is a model of how to do historical biography. Phan sets the stage with two chapters on Vietnam and Europe in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. He then places de Rhodes within this framework and demonstrates how he was influenced by the world around him and the social and religious situation in Vietnam. The third chapter deals with the way de Rhodes attempted to creatively present the Christian message in the



Vietnamese context dominated by an autochthonous ancestral cult overlaid with the imported metaphysics of Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.

But *Mission and Catechesis* is more than a biography. Like other books in the Orbis Faith and Cultures Series, it is also an examination of the complex interaction of cultures and Christianity constitutive of the missionary endeavor. The focus of the book is on how this interaction takes place in the catechism de Rhodes designed for the Vietnamese. In the fourth chapter, Phan examines the catechetical methods of both Protestants and Catholics in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe. He then looks at other catechisms produced for use in Asia, especially those of Francis Xavier, Alexandro Valignano, and Matteo Ricci. Phan compares de Rhodes's catechism with these others as well as the *Spiritual Exercises* of Jesuit founder Ignatius of Loyola. In the fifth chapter, Phan examines the structure and theological message of the catechism.

In the sixth and last chapter of the book, Phan attempts to define "inculturation" and describe the process it signifies. Those frightened or confused by the term should read this chapter first. The footnotes alone are valuable as a bibliography of contemporary work on the subject (much of it, not surprisingly, published by Orbis). Phan outlines several contemporary models of inculturation and the cultural theory of missionary anthropologist Louis Luzbetak and then examines de Rhodes's missionary methods in their light.

The book is significant for many reasons. One is that Phan provides a thorough examination of a figure about whom little has been published in English (of over one hundred sources in Phan's bibliography, only two are in English). Part of the reason for this dearth is the linguistic problem associated with Jesuit studies. The Jesuits corresponded and wrote in Italian, Latin, Portuguese, Spanish, and several other European languages. Few people know enough of these languages to study the Jesuits at any depth. Fewer still possess proficiency in these languages as well as in the Vietnamese and Sino-Vietnamese languages required for a study on de Rhodes. Not only does Phan bridge the linguistic gap for others, but he also provides a full translation of the eight-day catechism de Rhodes designed for the Vietnamese.

Phan, a professor at the Catholic University of America, has authored *Eternity in Time: A Study of Karl Rahner's Eschatology* (1988) and *Ethnicity, Nationality and Religious Experience* (1995), and has edited *Christianity and the Wider Ecumenism* (1990) as well as several other works on eschatology, theology, and culture. As in those efforts, there is little to criticize in *Mission and Catechesis*. Readers of Vietnamese may be somewhat disappointed that space constraints prevented Phan from including the Vietnamese text of the catechism. And there is at least one historical inaccuracy: Phan accidentally con-

fuses the Han (202 B.C.E. – 220 C.E.) and Ming (1368–1644 C.E.) dynasties in a footnote (251). But these are relatively minor problems.

Perhaps more disappointing is Phan's underestimation of de Rhodes's understanding of Vietnam's popular religiosity. In accounting for the fact that de Rhodes's attitude towards these religions was more conservative than Matteo Ricci's in China, Phan emphasizes de Rhodes's inferior knowledge of Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism, and his related inability to distinguish social from religious practices. But it seems more likely that de Rhodes understood the mass religiosity of common Vietnamese so well that he knew these distinctions were less significant among them than among Ricci's mandarin converts.

Also somewhat confusing is Phan's decision, for reasons he does not articulate, to leave Roberto de Nobili's catechetical writings out of his section on Asian catechisms. Geographically and culturally, de Nobili's catechism originated farther from Vietnam than Ricci's *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (which Phan does discuss). But chronologically de Nobili's is much closer than Ricci's. The end of de Nobili's career actually coincides with the beginning of de Rhodes's, and de Rhodes was waylaid in Goa during the height of the controversy surrounding de Nobili's missionary methods. Certainly de Rhodes would have heard of the infamous practices of the Italian *sannyasi*. But these are matters of emphasis and not necessarily deficiencies.

*Mission and Catechesis* is more than an academic exercise for Phan. As a Vietnamese scholar working in America, he views the book as a kind of "homecoming." Research for the book took Phan to his native Vietnam and he hopes the book might encourage other Vietnamese expatriates to "return and bathe in their own cultural pond and discover therein refreshing waters for their cultural enrichment and faith" (xvii).

*Mission and Catechesis* is eminently readable and for this reason would be accessible to undergraduate students. But its erudition and insight make it indispensable to specialists in missions, world Christianity, cultural studies, linguistic studies, and early modern Catholic history. In addition to the text and the translated catechism, Phan also includes several maps of seventeenth century Tonkin and Cochinchina, a timeline of de Rhodes's life, reproductions of several pages of the catechism, an extensive bibliography, and an index. Thus *Mission and Catechesis* is suited for those who pursue serious research as well as those who would read it simply for the inspiring and instructive story of this fine missionary.

—CHAD MULLET BAUMAN  
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



*Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity.* By Paula Fredriksen. Alfred A. Knopf, 1999, 327 pages.

In her original and well-received book, *From Jesus to Christ* (1988), Paula Fredriksen suggests that we can “perceive the lineaments of the Jesus of history” (xi) and then proceeds to treat Jesus of Nazareth in a chapter that is less than three pages long. In her new book, Fredriksen returns to this topic, which she clearly eschewed in her previous work, and jumps into the multi-front arena of what has been termed the “Third Quest.”

The book begins with a brief discussion of methodological concerns in which she notes the recent proliferation of different lives of Jesus. Here and throughout she raises the same issues as in her useful article, “What You See Is What You Get: Context and Content in Current Research on the Historical Jesus” [*Theology Today* 52 (1995): 75-97]; she is concerned with the blatantly apologetic biases prevalent in the work of various scholars who find in Jesus a liberal whom we can all love, one who rebukes the intolerant and stands up to the oppressor. That she echoes the complaints Albert Schweitzer made almost a century ago does not say much for scholarly progress in the field. Furthermore, the problem of the ever multiplying identities of Jesus also stems from the various models employed, which, though useful, can often mislead, especially when our data is so limited. “Do we have any polestar, then, by which we might navigate our way through this confusion? I think we do. Though the word is unfashionable in academic history right now, I shall breathe it anyway, here: We have facts. Facts about Jesus, and facts about the movement that formed after his crucifixion” (7).

Throughout the book she relies heavily on the work of E. P. Sanders, who especially in his more recent work, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (1993), suggests that we come much closer to the historical Jesus if we focus less on what he said—the propensity of most of the recent work on the historical Jesus, particularly the Q/Cynic school—and more on what he did. To alter an old adage, actions are more historically reliable than words.

One of the “facts” that Fredriksen posits as determinative for her reconstruction of Jesus’ mission and death is that although he himself was put to death presumably for sedition—for that was generally why people were crucified—nonetheless his followers were not. By the end of the book, after she has dismantled some of the leading explanatory theories about Jesus and his mission, Fredriksen will return to this apparent anomaly.

Chapter 1, “Gospel Truth and Historical Innocence,” as its title may imply, addresses the factual unreliability of the Gospels as well as their historical hind-

sight regarding the destruction of the Temple. This hindsight is something that we have in common with the Gospels. Jesus and Paul, on the other hand, stand on the other side of this historical divide, and it cannot be emphasized enough, especially in the face the very long history of Christianity, that for pre-70, first-century Jews the temple would have been a real and significant institution, central to their religious life.

Chapter 2, "God and Israel in Roman Antiquity" brings this idea home articulating the temple-centered religious behavior of Jews in antiquity. It is obvious that the author has thought a great deal about temple and ritual; this chapter would be an excellent introduction, especially for its methodology, to the study of Judaism in first-century Palestine.

Chapter 3, "Trajectories: Paul, the Gospels, and Jesus," contrary to the traditional approach, takes Paul's priority to the Gospels seriously and employs what we can learn about Jesus from Paul as a framework upon which to lay further Gospel information. Fredriksen continually insists that "the public coherence of his message to his own contemporaries" must be sought. Her Jesus not surprisingly turns out to be an eschatologically orientated prophet who practices healings and exorcism.

Chapter 4, "Contexts: The Galilee, Judea, and Jesus" presents the social context and then John's mission. We are warned: "In brief, the more facile the ethical or political relevance that a particular construct of Jesus presents, the more suspect its worth as history" (202). Finally, Fredriksen rejects modern reconstructions whereby the cleansing of the Temple is the action that leads to the crucifixion. In addition to addressing the source problems, from a practical point of view, she wonders who would have been aware of a minor troublemaker in an immense temple crowded with pilgrims.

In Chapter 5, "The Days in Jerusalem," relying on the Johannine chronology, Fredriksen sees Jesus making regular visits to Jerusalem, where the authorities were well aware of his prophetic message. For some reason, one year the crowds got out of hand and acclaimed him messiah. He was crucified, but "the crowds' action called forth no Roman response precisely because Pilate knew that the message of Jesus' movement posed no threat to Roman power" (243).

Fredriksen has certainly succeeded in one of the main goals of the book: only an historian could feel comfortable with her Jesus; few of us could identify with him. Her critical method prunes our evidence down so much that any particular historical personality is lost in her heavy contextualization (an apology for this can be found in the quotation used as the epigraph of the book). It would



be too easy to poke holes in her "crowd" theory: it makes the crucifixion look like a party that merely got out of hand.

This readable book is written for a popular audience; hence the publisher and the lack of any notes within the text; however, at the end of the book, she provides notes for each chapter in which she cites her sources and sets her views within the scholarly debate. There are two "preludes" in the book, i.e., sections of historical fiction, one on the temple burning, the other about a young boy, who turns out to be Jesus, going on a pilgrimage from the Galilee to Jerusalem with his family. These might make some people wince, but they are actually well done, especially the latter. A paperback is forthcoming.

—ADAM H. BECKER  
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

*A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South.* By Eugene D. Genovese. Mercer University Press, 1998, xvi and 180 pages.

*Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863-1877.* By Daniel W. Stowell. Oxford University Press, 1998, 278 pages.

The study of Southern Christianity during the Civil War and Reconstruction era has recently been greatly enriched with the publication of works by Eugene Genovese and Daniel Stowell. The latest vintage from the seasoned historian Genovese grew out of the Lamar Lectures delivered at Mercer University. Meanwhile Stowell's first major work is a revision of his doctoral dissertation completed at the University of Florida. Both scholars, the doyen and the newcomer, provide texts that are sure to play a significant role in the study of Southern religion for years to come.

Genovese's book has numerous strengths, but its subtitle is somewhat misleading; the bulk of the chapters deal not with the impact of the Confederacy's fall upon the thinking of Southern clergy, but rather with the efforts of Southern clergy prior to and during the War to reform the practice of slavery in the South. In dealing with this issue, Genovese rejects the "guilt thesis" that has become so prevalent among historians of the South. This "guilt thesis" holds that Southern evangelicals felt a deep sense of guilt about the practice of slavery and sought to displace this guilt by trying to reform the institution of slavery.

Genovese argues that Southern Christians were not riddled with guilt, but rather were motivated by a desire to make slavery fully reflect what they saw as a biblical slaveholding ethic. The Southern evangelical “agitation for reform” of slavery was persistent both before and during the Civil War, and reflects the conviction of Southern Christians that slavery in the South fell short of biblical standards. The two main abuses they saw in the Southern slave system were slave illiteracy and the separation of slave families. The former denied slaves access to the Bible and salvation, while the latter violated the sanctity of marriage and family. Southern clergy called for tougher penalties for slaveholders who abused slaves, for the repeal of literacy laws, and for the legitimization of slave marriages.

These evangelical efforts at reforming the institution of slavery met stiff resistance both before and during the War, despite the warnings from ministers that the abuses of the peculiar institution as it existed would bring down God’s wrath upon the Confederacy. Evangelical reform initiatives ultimately failed, Genovese argues, because their success would have amounted to a full-scale social revolution. The attempt to live up to a biblical slaveholding ethic threatened the power of the master class because it would have fundamentally altered the master/slave relationship. What would have been created by the reforming evangelicals, Genovese believes, would have been an alternative system of un-free labor that would have undermined the political power of the slaveholding elite. Ultimately, this is what many Southern divines wanted: a system somewhere between the existing abusive slave system of the South and the unbiblical free labor system that existed in the North.

Genovese also challenges the popular conviction that post-bellum Southern racial attitudes were consistent with antebellum attitudes, i.e., that there is direct continuity between the antebellum defense of slavery and postbellum segregation. Genovese contends that Southern evangelical attitudes towards race changed after the Civil War, as they increasingly embraced theories of scientific racism. He attributes this to the increasingly liberal theology of Southern Christians. Before the War Southern divines like Robert L. Dabney and James Henley Thornwell had rejected such theories of scientific racism because they involved a separate genesis of the black race, a view that ran afoul of biblical orthodoxy. Genovese claims that after the War Southern Christians increasingly embraced liberal Northern theology that opened the door to a greater degree of racism and segregation in the South. Only in the post-War years did Southern Christians begin to accept ideas of black inferiority and the need for racial separation.



Daniel Stowell's study begins roughly where Genovese's leaves off, examining Southern evangelicalism in the Reconstruction period. His is an institutional history of the process of rebuilding religious life in the South in the years following the Civil War. Stowell focuses primarily on the three major Protestant denominations of the South—Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists—and centers his research primarily on the states of Tennessee and Georgia. The portrait he paints, however, is fairly broad, examining the role of Northern and Southern whites as well as Northern and Southern African Americans in the reconstruction of religion in the South.

Stowell examines how three distinct groups approached the challenge of the religious reconstruction of the South: white Southerners, white Northerners, and blacks from both the North and South. Each group had its own agenda for the post-War religious life of the South. White Southerners sought to restore the *status quo ante bellum*. White Northerners attempted to Christianize the benighted Southerners, black and white. And African Americans from both the North and South saw an opportunity to create their own autonomous religious life for the first time in the South. The first half of Stowell's work examines how these three groups and their respective agendas played out alongside one another and against one another in the era between Appomattox and Redemption.

Many scholars of Southern religion in recent decades have emphasized that during the Civil War the Southern churches argued that the Confederacy was God's chosen nation and that God was therefore on its side. Some have concluded that because this was the case, Southerners had no choice but to interpret defeat as punishment from God. Stowell challenges such assumptions, arguing that after the initial shock of defeat wore off Southern religious leaders were able to offer an interpretation of the War that still upheld the South as God's New Israel. Southern ministers like Moses Drury Hoge explained that defeat at the hands of the heathen Yankees was God's way of chastening his chosen people and preparing them for a brighter future, and even after the war Robert L. Dabney continued to justify the institution of slavery.

While Southern whites may not have interpreted the outcome of the War as punishment from God, Northern whites certainly interpreted it as a vindication of their divine cause. Northern Christians believed that the clergy in the South had been rendered unfit to minister to the spiritual needs of the Southern people because of the way they had perverted the gospel to defend slavery. This contempt for the Southern churches motivated the people that Stowell refers to as "religious scalawags": Northern missionaries who came South to meet the spiritual needs of black and white Southerners alike.

The “religious scalawags” met with nothing but contempt from Southern whites, but the financial and organizational support they offered was welcomed by freedpeople in the South. Neither Southern nor Northern whites, however, offered Southern blacks the true religious equality and autonomy that they craved, Stowell argues. He demonstrates that Southern whites went through a five-stage process of adjusting to African-American demands for religious independence. First, whites argued that antebellum race relations in the church should persist. This hopeless effort was soon replaced by attempts to establish black congregations with white ministers, followed by an effort to provide black ministers to these congregations while keeping the black churches under the authority of local white associations. Finally, whites began to cede more autonomy to the black congregations and eventually supported the formation of separate black denominations. In Stowell’s account, African Americans were the primary historical actors in all these stages, with whites simply accommodating their demands while trying to maintain as much of their former social and religious dominance as before the War.

Stowell spends several chapters examining the efforts of white Southern Christians to reinforce and perpetuate their separate Southern denominations after the War. Whites in the South immediately set to work to revitalize the local churches, reorganize their denominational bodies, and revive Southern religious periodicals. Such efforts thwarted the mission of the “religious scalawags,” who came South hoping to expand their Northern denominations. White Southerners also established denominational colleges and Sunday Schools that served to perpetuate among future generations distinctively Southern Christian ideals and values.

The end result of such Southern efforts at denomination rebuilding was to frustrate efforts at sectional reunion. The Northern and Southern wings of the Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists, Stowell suggests, continued to be separated by their different interpretations of the meaning of the War’s outcome. Nevertheless, the Northern denominations did make overtures at reconciliation in the years following the War that were rebuffed by Southern Christians. Stowell maintains that Southern Christian leaders were the most radical sectionalists of the post-War era. As the nineteenth century waned, however, gradual steps were taken by the South to respond to the Northern efforts at reunion. In 1876 the Northern and Southern branches of the Methodist Episcopal Church established fraternal relations, as did the Northern and Southern Presbyterians in 1882. Finally in 1894 Northern and Southern Baptists reached a cooperative agreement, thus bringing the religious reconstruction of the South to a close.



Stowell's study is an institutional history, and as such it may disappoint those looking for more coverage of the religious views and attitudes of the man and woman "in the pew" during this period. But this work provides a comprehensive and much-needed examination of the role of Southern religion in the Reconstruction period. This is an aspect of Reconstruction that is usually absent from general histories of the era and to which church historians have paid too little attention. The works by both Stowell and Genovese are serious and valuable new contributions to the study of Southern religion in the Civil War/Reconstruction period. They will both prove themselves immensely useful to scholars and students of Southern Christianity by uncovering new ground and provoking important discussions about the role and nature of Christianity during this pivotal and controversial period.

—JOE L. COKER

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*Marriage, Family, and Law in Medieval Europe: Collected Studies.* By Michael M. Sheehan, CSB, Edited by James K. Farge. Introduction by Joel T. Rosenthal. University of Toronto Press, 1997, xxxi and 330 pages.

The present volume reflects the breadth, interests, and methods of Michael Sheehan and vividly communicates his sensitivities and contributions to medieval history during his life time. The sixteen essays in the volume, all of them the work of Sheehan, were collected and re-edited by James K. Farge, his colleague at the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, following Sheehan's death in a cycling accident in August 1992. Containing essays published over a span of thirty years, the volume was intended as a tribute to Sheehan. It brings together the author's work relating to marriage, family, and law, and makes it more widely and readily available to scholars and students of medieval history. The volume also contains a complete bibliography of all of Sheehan's work completed during his lifetime.

The essays are presented chronologically, the first dating from 1961 and the last 1992. In turn, the reader is afforded the unique opportunity of watching Sheehan's interests and methods develop and change over time. Sheehan was easily able to slide from work in English law, from use of the last will and testament, to women's property rights, and to the social and canonical definition of marriage in medieval theology and society. As Joel Rosenthal helpfully explains, Sheehan "sought to explicate the nature and evolution or development of three basic medieval institutions: the last will, in its emergence as a legal and social

instrument whereby different and even competing social forces had their moment of expression; Christian marriage, as it became defined and codified in the high Middle Ages; and the secular family, especially as it was shaped by the same forces that argued for the definition of marriage" (xiv).

The main argument running throughout Sheehan's work is that the growth and development of canon law during the high Middle Ages acutely shaped some of the most important social institutions in medieval society. To begin with, as Sheehan argues in his early work, the will developed essentially in response to the growing need within the Catholic church to dispense goods and alms to the poor and provide for one's soul through the benefit of the liturgy performed after death. What began as an assurance for the soul by concerned Christians came, over time, to provide "a voluntary source of income for the well-developed social services of medieval England" (7). The will moved from a religious document to a social one, binding family members, patrons, and the individual to his or her kingdom. Furthermore, in the next article, Sheehan argues that it is "canon law that came to support and enforce the property rights of women during and after death" (34). By means of marriage there was a collusion between canon law and the rights it engendered and the social forces that fortified the family and marriage practices.

Sheehan's best work, and that which has had the greatest impact in the field, are his articles on marriage, namely: "The Formation and Stability of Marriage in Fourteenth-Century England: Evidence of an Ely Register"; "Marriage and Family in English Conciliar and Synodal Legislation"; "Choice of Marriage Partner in the Middle Ages: Development and Mode of Application of a Theory of Marriage"; "Marriage Theory and Practice in the Conciliar Legislation and Diocesan Statutes of Medieval England"; and "Theory and Practice: Marriage of the Unfree and the Poor in Medieval Society." As the titles make clear, Sheehan's concern is with the intersection between the theory espoused by canon law and the effect of such laws on the meaning and practice of marriage during the medieval period. Unlike many social historians, and historians of the family, Sheehan was not content to use only survey sources such as the polyptique, tax roll, court roll, etc. Rather, his interests and methods go beyond the make up and role of the family as quantifiable by the social historian, to what and how the family came to be defined. For Sheehan, one of the most important institutions to exercise a general influence over the change of family patterns was the Church. The actions of the Church were primarily in the realm of ideas and moral guidance (89). Yet the family and the Church came together in the creation of marriage as sacrament. Moreover, throughout the course of the medieval period, the Church played a



role in altering the practices and social components involved in marriage. By the end of the thirteenth century, with the introduction and dissemination of the notion of consent, marriage as an institution came to represent the interests of the individuals involved, subsuming the role of the lord, family, and kinship group to the desires and commitment of the couple (86 and 117). Thus, the creation and propagation of canon law, that is the theory behind marriage, came to drastically alter the definition and practice of marriage. Sheehan is not only able to identify this change but also to trace its penetration into medieval society through the use of sermons, liturgy, confessor's manuals and documents of practice such as ecclesiastical registers and court cases.

Sheehan's other articles in the collection, though interesting and important, pale in comparison to his work on marriage. His essay on women during the time of Chaucer, perhaps important and innovative when it first appeared in 1985, has not stood the test of time and lies too flat and general to leave a lasting impression on its reader. Likewise, the remaining articles are quite general and not as grounded or profound as his other work. The main drawback to this collection, which is not important or pervasive enough to stop an interested reader, is that at times it is repetitious, as is wont to happen when a scholar's articles on a closely related topic are gathered together. Yet Sheehan is a lively writer with a passion for his topic and a profound commitment to explaining what he has observed and uncovered in the transformation of medieval society under the growth and influence of the reformed Church. In all, it is a very important collection of articles that makes available the work of a perspicacious medievalist whose presence and continued contribution to the field will indeed be missed.

—ANNE E. LESTER  
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

*Wandering at Ease in the Zhuangzi*. Edited by Roger T. Ames. State University of New York Press, 1998, vii and 239 pages.

Few books are as intriguing as the *Zhuangzi*. Attributed to a mysterious "Master Zhuang" of the third century B.C.E., this classic of Daoist philosophy is one of the primary sources of Chinese thought, religion, and art. Textually, the *Zhuangzi* meanders among diverse genres: from deep cosmic speculation, to keen philosophical analysis, to fantastic poetic reverie. It also includes some of the funniest stories in world literature. Like Walt Whitman, the *Zhuangzi* is big, free, and unafraid of contradicting itself. As such, it is impossible to read in a

staid fashion. Fortunately, *Wandering at Ease in the Zhuangzi*, a recent addition to the State University of New York (SUNY) Press series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture, approaches this weird and wily work in just the right spirit. Engaging and thought provoking, *Wandering at Ease* would be enjoyable reading for anyone interested in Chinese thought and religion, comparative philosophy, literary studies, or the art of living well in an ever-changing world.

*Wandering at Ease in the Zhuangzi* brings together eleven articles by various scholars of Chinese religion and philosophy. Editor Roger Ames, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Hawaii, also edits *Philosophy East & West* and *China Review International*. Ames ranks among the top scholars of Chinese and comparative philosophy, having co-authored (with David Hall) several books including *Thinking through Confucius* (1987) and *Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Cultures* (1998). *Wandering at Ease* continues in the same vein of cross-cultural philosophy, in this instance focused on a particular text. The result is a delightful volume that demonstrates how one reads texts that defy coherent interpretation.

The key to understanding *Wandering at Ease* lies in the title. “Wandering at ease” is the traditional title (actually the opening line) of the first chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, and represents the Daoist ideal of flowing with the Dao, of harmonizing oneself with the myriad transformations summed up in the term *wuwei* (“non-acting”). Such a life is marked by sincere yet unattached participation in everyday events.

One who “wanders at ease” knows the conventional nature of society and the hubris of “civilization.” She can be profoundly critical of the limited perspectives of “ordinary people,” yet does not condemn, preferring instead to marvel at Nature and to muse on the endearing foibles of humanity. The *Zhuangzi* invites us to “wander at ease” and to wonder at the cosmos. In *Wandering at Ease*, the reader gets to tag along with a few scholars who “wonder as they wander.”

The articles which comprise *Wandering at Ease* tackle different issues and each contribution marks an abrupt shift in perspective and tone. In true Daoist fashion, the essays do not follow any clear, orderly path but proceed in an ambling, conversational manner. This may be disconcerting for some readers, but certain commonalities among the essays do surface.

Three of the essays (Chris Jochim’s “Just Say No to ‘No Self’ in *Zhuangzi*,” William Callahan’s “Cook Ding’s Life on a Whetstone,” and Daniel Coyle’s “On the *Zhenren*”) are predominantly philosophical and are the “meatiest” of the contributions. Three others (John Makeham’s “Between *Chen* and *Cai*,” Henry



Skaja's "How to interpret Chapter 16 of the *Zhuangzi*," and Lisa Raphals's "On Hui Shi") are more sinologically oriented and so may prove the least interesting to a general audience. Four pieces (Kirill Thompson's "What is the Reason of Failure or Success?," Randall Peerenboom's "Living Beyond the Bounds," James Sellman's "Transformational Humor in the *Zhuangzi*," and Brian Lundberg's "A Meditation on Friendship") take more literary/interpretive approaches to the *Zhuangzi*, and thus probably have the most to offer a casual reader. The book concludes with Roger Ames's "Knowing in the *Zhuangzi*: 'From Here, on the Bridge, over the River Hao,'" which combines philosophical and literary approaches in discussing the quintessential *Zhuangzi* episode, Zhuangzi's exchange with Hui Shi on the happiness of the playful fish.

Each of the essays in *Wandering at Ease* is worthwhile in its own way, and all contributions are erudite, insightful, and thought-provoking. However, several pieces stand out. Jochim's article is critical of those who interpret the *Zhuangzi* to be advancing the doctrine of "no self" (interpreting it this way, he believes, anachronistically projects the modern European notion of "self" back to third century China). The criticism is to the point and sounds a note of caution for those who, all too eagerly, interpret across boundaries. Sellman's discussion of humor, by contrast, highlights the integral role of laughter in the "religious" transformation that Zhuangzi calls for, something many academics tend to overlook (Zhuangzi would undoubtedly laugh at our scholarly pretensions to "serious work"). Coyle's essay on the *Zhenren* ("genuine/perfected person") is a fascinating discussion that gets to the heart of Zhuangzi's mystical language and his spiritual ideal. Coyle compares the *Zhenren* to Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, both of whom are "6,000 feet beyond man and time" (201). The most interesting piece, though, is Peerenboom's essay in which he attempts to present novelist Henry Miller as a Daoist sage. Although not absolutely convincing, Peerenboom's essay provides much food for thought. I wonder—could we consider Jack Kerouac or Allen Ginsberg Daoist sages?

It is difficult to find fault with *Wandering at Ease*, especially for an unabashed *Zhuangzi* fan like myself. The book has no real "center," but this reflects the structure (or lack thereof) of the *Zhuangzi* itself—an ungainly text if there ever was one. My chief criticism, if it even qualifies as such, is the rather unreflective manner in which several contributors bat about the terms "mysticism" or "mystical." As anyone who studies religious texts and figures knows, such terms are so vague that they require precise qualification if they are to convey any meaning. Certainly referring to Zhuangzi's ideal state as "nature mysticism" (as Sellman does on p. 171) does not do him or other Daoists justice.

Overall, *Wandering at Ease* is a wonderful venture in interpretation. I suspect that those most likely to read it will be scholars of Chinese philosophy and religion (the usual readers of the SUNY series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture), but non-specialists will find several of the essays interesting as well. I would certainly recommend it to my colleagues and students.

In this age of globalization (which usually means global capitalism and consumerism), more of us need to ponder the perspectives which the *Zhuangzi* presents, and to engage them actively. *Wandering at Ease* provides a good opening to the many conversations we can have with this classic of world literature. In *Wandering at Ease* we are afforded the opportunity to think, to marvel, to laugh, and to think once more. In the words of “The Godfather,” this book makes us an offer we can’t refuse.

—JOHN M. THOMPSON  
GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION

*Jesus Is My Uncle: Christology from a Hispanic Perspective.* By Luis G. Pedraja. Abingdon Press, 1999, 151 pages.

Proceeding from the basic premise that language and culture shape theological thinking, Dr. Luis G. Pedraja, Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at Perkins School of Theology, advocates the need for theologians to engage in dialogue with diverse theological traditions in order to gain new insights while uncovering biases and distortions in our own theology and praxis. *Jesus Is My Uncle* invites readers to take seriously the cultural situatedness of all theology by questioning the “universality” of early christological formulations that have dominated the church’s understanding of Jesus Christ. Pedraja’s methodology suggests a continuous reformulation of Christology grounded in the dynamic activity of God in history. While acknowledging that other contemporary theologians have developed similar strategies, Pedraja privileges the U.S. Hispanic experience of “bilingualism” and “biculturalism” in the formation of theological thought. In comparing the Hispanic theological language of *mestizaje* to the christological paradox which affirms the full humanity and full divinity of Christ, this text attempts to untangle some of the problematics of traditional Christology, specifically Docetic tendencies that deny Jesus full humanity.

In chapter 1, the author demonstrates how the analysis of our most immediate experiences and expressions of faith is a necessary aspect of every theological endeavor, for all knowledge of Jesus Christ is mediated by culture and language. Examining Christology through the dual lens of Hispanic bilingual-



ism and biculturalism, the author concludes that “in sharing perspectives with each other, we avoid the distortions of our narrow viewpoint and enhance both our understanding and our appreciation of God” (22). The chapters that follow examine the terms, concepts, and experiences unique to U.S. Hispanic faith by focusing on the practices of popular religion in order to present a more contextualized Christology.

Since it is within the context of human experience and history that we encounter God, Pedraja takes the transcendence of God seriously yet embraces an immanent understanding of God. Chapter 2 argues that accepting the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth as the defining revelation of God’s love for humanity does not deny “God’s ability to become incarnate in our words and deeds” (42). Drawing upon Peter Abelard’s atonement theory (that God loves humanity enough to suffer with us, as one of us), Pedraja concludes that God’s act of solidarity (the Incarnation) empowers us to live in solidarity with the poor and marginalized.

Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate the power of language to shape Christology. A technical term like “incarnation” (*encarnación*) remains primarily an abstraction in English, but for the Spanish-speaking person the connection of *encarnación* to flesh and meat grounds a technical theological term in everyday human experience so that, when reading John 1:14 in Spanish, it becomes almost impossible to deny the full humanity of Jesus: “*el Verbo se hizo carne*” (literally, “the Verb became meat”; the NRSV reads “the Word became flesh”). Furthermore, the Spanish language translation of *logos* as “*Verbo*” (verb) connotes the active presence of God in our lives and in history.

In the concluding chapter, we see how the Hispanic community “incarnates” its Christology through a new form of fellowship initiated by the love of God but mediated through human relationships. Luis Pedraja, along with other U.S. Hispanic theologians like Roberto Goizueta and Virgilio Elizondo, envisions the community of faith as God’s incarnate presence continuing Christ’s transforming work on earth. The common experience of many U.S. Hispanics is rejection and exclusion from mainstream culture except in the church, which became a “home” for the marginalized, resulting in a vision of the church as transforming society by empowering the powerless. Such an ecclesiology is an essential component of both Latin American and U.S. Hispanic liberation theology, since “the church must be willing to discern God’s presence in the world and to follow to wherever God leads” (106).

The book’s title states a simple fact from Dr. Pedraja’s life, a fact shared by many Hispanics: he has an uncle named Jesus. Having “Jesus” as your relative,

friend, and neighbor personalizes Christ, an experience with profound implications for understanding the Incarnation: “I grew up thinking of God’s Son as someone who lived near me and who had a human face like those who bore his name” (15). However, as more Hispanics make their home in the United States, many named “*Jesús*” change their name in order to conform to the norms and expectations of the English-speaking church. Consequently, U.S. Hispanics find themselves living in two cultures without fully belonging in either. Dr. Pedraja asserts that this experience of being “caught between two worlds”—two languages, two countries, and two cultures—enables Hispanic theologians in the United States to develop discourses that build bridges between different cultures, languages, and perspectives.

*Jesus Is My Uncle* is a highly readable work of interest to the pastor, lay person, and professional theologian. The thoughts within are both academic and personal, and Dr. Pedraja mines rich theological ground while drawing upon sources as diverse as Wittgenstein, Whitehead, and Barth. Yet, according to Pedraja, “a good theology must speak beyond the closed academic circles of universities and scholars and speak the language of the people and empower their faith” (31). Indeed, a text on vocation from a Hispanic perspective—a further application of Dr. Pedraja’s idea that academic theologians serve as “bilingual” interpreters between the academy and the church—would be a welcome addition to theological scholarship.

—RUBÉN ROSARIO-RODRÍGUEZ  
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence.* By John Sanders. InterVarsity Press, 1998, 367 pages.

John Sanders defends a relational model of God grounded in the biblical witness, coupled with a commitment to philosophical rigor and sensitivity to the experience of Christian believers. Sanders argues that, like a lover or parent who desires a deep relationship with her spouse or child, the God of Christianity is open to genuine give-and-take relations with creatures. Therefore, God’s openness necessitates that God takes risks.

Sanders begins with a treatment of anthropomorphism in the Scriptures. He notes that we cannot escape using human language when speaking of God given our linguistic limitations. If we conceive of God as a living God who interacts with us, “then we are speaking anthropomorphically” (23).



In the third and fourth chapters Sanders further considers the biblical material, noting that both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures portray a God who enters into reciprocal relations with creatures. The Scriptures display a God who repents of actions and changes course in response to the petitions of God's servants (e.g., Gen 18:16-33; Ex 32; and 1 Sam 2:30). He also addresses the so-called pan-causality texts (e.g., Jer 18:6; Rom 9-11). Sanders argues, referring to the potter metaphor used in Jeremiah and by Paul, that sometimes "The clay refuses to be shaped in the direction the potter desires" (87). Other issues of interest include Sanders' extensive use of the pathos of Jesus as evidence of the pathos of God, and the relationship between prophecy and foreknowledge. In the case of the latter, Sanders provides a convincing case against those who insist that omniprescience is a feature of the biblical account of omniscience. God may predict the future as something God will determine, regardless of human response, or a conditional statement may be uttered, or a forecast based on God's exhaustive knowledge of the past, present, and future probabilities (136).

Sanders follows this with an examination of the history of the Christian doctrine of God. He offers a number of examples of those who affirmed some variety of the relational doctrine of God (many of the ante-Nicene fathers, the Cappadocians, Jacob Arminius, John Wesley, Lorenzo McCabe, and a host of contemporary theologians and philosophers), as well as advocates of the "no-risk" or non-relational model of God (Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, Martin Luther, Paul Tillich, and Carl Henry).

In chapter six Sanders defends the viability of the risky view of providence he advances in the preceding chapters. Unfortunately, Sanders' treatment of divine freedom and essential properties (in this case, goodness) is weak, and the subject warrants a much lengthier treatment. The problem, which he addresses in an endnote, is over whether God possesses morally significant freedom. If God cannot sin, then God's actions are not morally praiseworthy. Sanders agrees that God must possess libertarian freedom, otherwise creation and redemption were necessary (316). However, Sanders reconstructs (but does not actually endorse) the argument to the effect that God possesses libertarian freedom but lacks morally significant freedom (because the divine nature constrains God). This argument strikes me as little more than a subterfuge that results in an unnecessary restriction on God's freedom. It seems that if we want to say that God's acts warrant our praise, then God must possess the kind of freedom that is a prerequisite for acts to be praiseworthy, which entails that we must bite the bullet and say that God is not essentially omnibenevolent.

In chapter seven, Sanders' work on divine self-limitation and the role of permission in God's sovereignty is well developed and thought provoking. He proffers a fellowship model of divine sovereignty. He contends that God chooses to be vulnerable and exercises general, rather than specific, sovereignty. God's self-restraint "should be understood as the restraint of love in concern" for God's creatures (228). This is not finite-godism, however. Rather, God has freely chosen to exercise self-restraint to the extent of allowing the divine will to be thwarted.

In chapter eight, Sanders considers applications of his account of God's character and providence to soteriology, theodicy, prayer, and divine guidance. Concerning suffering and evil, Sanders owns up to the problem of gratuitous evil and takes the bold step of claiming that gratuitous evils are to be expected in light of God's project and the kind of providence God exercises. Also of interest, on the matter of prayer and guidance, Sanders argues that prayer affects God. God often chooses a course of action as a response to the prayers of the saints. Prayer is genuinely conversational. God does, however, reserve the right to respond to a prayer as God sees fit. Regarding guidance, while God has preferences regarding our choices, God does not have a blueprint for our lives beyond intending that we become like Jesus (276).

In the final chapter, Sanders admits that there are many issues that still need to be addressed in relation to his account of divine action. I would suggest that a fuller treatment of the implications of this model of God for christological issues would be in order. For example, does Sanders' account entail that we must accept some type of kenotic christology? I am inclined to answer in the negative, although a kenotic christology is certainly a more viable option within this model than it would be within non-relational accounts of the doctrine of God. Finally, Sanders does not address the value of divine suffering *with* humans in any detail. He considers how God is affected and suffers as a result of our sinful actions; but he says very little about God suffering with creatures when they suffer. Contra process theists, Sanders seems to hold that God is not a fellow sufferer with us (336, n. 92). However, many that defend a model of God similar to Sanders' maintain that God suffers with us. One can reject process theism and maintain that God has freely chosen to suffer with creation. However, this may mean, but may not entail, accepting some variety of panentheism, as Marcel Sarot has argued in *God, Passibility and Corporeality* (Kok Pharos, 1992; cf. Thomas Aquinas' remarks in *Summa Contra Gentiles* I, chs. 89-91).

Shortcomings aside, Sanders' volume is one of the most engaging and incisive treatments of God's relationship to creation to have been published in re-



cent years. His biblical, theological, and philosophical erudition is impressive. Sanders' volume warrants the attention of anyone interested in the doctrine of God, particularly those interested in the interface between biblical studies, theology, and analytic philosophy.

—ANDREI A. BUCKAREFF  
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

## CONTRIBUTORS

CHRISTIAN BERG holds a physics degree from Würzburg University (Diplomphysiker) and a theology degree from Heidelberg University (Magister theologiae). He investigated Ian Barbour's work in his theological doctoral dissertation, which he submitted to Heidelberg University earlier this year. The thesis explores Barbour's contribution to a proper determination of the relationship of science and theology, referring to its methodological, metaphysical, and ethical dimension.

BRYAN BIBB is a doctoral candidate at Princeton Theological Seminary in Hebrew Bible. His dissertation examines the theological relationships between law and narrative in the book of Leviticus. Other research interests include paleo-Hebrew epigraphy, the religion of ancient Israel, and postmodern hermeneutics. He and his wife Jennifer live with their Shetland Sheepdog Maggie in Greenville, South Carolina, where he is a member of the religion department at Furman University.

RANDY BUSH is currently the pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Racine, Wisconsin. He is pursuing his doctorate at Marquette University, in Theology and Ethics.

BO KAREN LEE is a third-year Ph.D. candidate in the Historical Theology program at Princeton Theological Seminary. Her main interests lie in the field of Christian mysticism, with a special focus on the theological writings of Madame Jeanne Guyon (17th century France).

JILL L. MCNISH is a fourth year doctoral student in the Psychiatry and Religion program at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She is an Episcopal priest and is interested in applying theories of depth psychology to the development of deeper and more informed understandings of God's presence and unfolding in the human psyche.

STEPHANIE STIDHAM ROGERS is a third-year Ph.D. student at Princeton Theological Seminary. She completed her B.A. in English literature with a minor in Religious Studies at Westmont College. She completed her MDiv from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1995, and her ThM from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1997.





## Call For Papers

*KOINONIA*, a journal published twice a year by doctoral students under the auspices of Princeton Theological Seminary, invites doctoral students currently enrolled in accredited programs to submit papers to be considered for publication. *KOINONIA* is indexed in *Religion Index One* and is carried by over 95 institutional libraries.

**Articles.** The fall issue of the journal is an open issue. The editors invite papers which explore emerging areas of interest in the study of religion and offer potential for interdisciplinary dialogue. Papers on all topics will be considered. **The deadline for the open issue is January 15.**

The editorial board of *KOINONIA* also hosts an annual forum at Princeton Theological Seminary. The editors select a central essay for presentation at the forum and invite responses from doctoral students in a variety of disciplines in religious studies. The central essay and responses are subsequently published in the spring issue.

For the 2001 Fall Forum, the editors invite papers on the following topics: “public theologies: construction and application”; “the future of ecumenism”; “the church and Israel.” **The deadline for papers to be considered for the Fall Forum is April 15.**

**Book Reviews.** Each issue of *KOINONIA* contains about a dozen critical reviews of important, recently published books in religious studies. Students interested in reviewing books for *KOINONIA* should contact the executive editor.

**Submission Specifications.** Submitted essays should be original, unpublished work. All submissions are reviewed by an editorial board comprised of doctoral students representing different areas of religious and theological studies. Full manuscripts are required. Style specifications are available by request or may be downloaded from our website at [www.ptsem.edu/koinonia](http://www.ptsem.edu/koinonia). Submissions should be sent to *KOINONIA JOURNAL* at the address below or as an e-mail attachment to [KOINONIA@PTSEM.EDU](mailto:KOINONIA@PTSEM.EDU).

Correspondence and submissions should be addressed to:

KOINONIA JOURNAL  
Princeton Theological Seminary  
P.O. Box 821  
Princeton, NJ 08542-0803

Deirdre King Hainsworth, Executive Editor  
[deirdre.hainsworth@ptsem.edu](mailto:deirdre.hainsworth@ptsem.edu)  
Scott Paeth, Production Editor  
[scott.paeth@ptsem.edu](mailto:scott.paeth@ptsem.edu)

Electronic version: <http://www.ptsem.edu/koinonia>

Annual subscription	\$16.00
Student price	\$8.00
Institution price	\$24.00



KOINONIA JOURNAL  
Princeton Theological Seminary  
P.O. Box 821  
Princeton, NJ 08542

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 190  
Princeton, NJ 08542

Speer Library Princeton Theological  
Julie E. Dawson  
P.O. Box 821  
Princeton, NJ 08542-0803

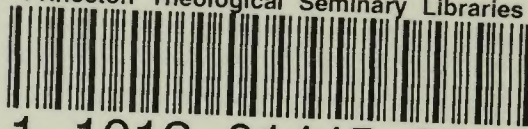
30 9014113802  
101  
508  
XL  
TE  
9790  
10-18-01 32180  
LBC





FOR USE IN LIBRARY ONLY.

Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries



1 1012 01445 5598

FOR USE IN LIBRARY ONLY.



